

12. 2c.

SERMONS

UPON THE FOLLOWING

SUBJECTS,

PIZ.

- | | |
|--|---|
| I. Eternal Life the Reward of patient continuance in well doing. | IX. Of the Affections. |
| II. Moral Perfection the ultimate Intention of all the works and ways of God. | X. Of Reason and Conscience. |
| III. The nature of Enthusiasm. | XI. The Loss of the Soul, and the Torments it may suffer in a future State. |
| IV. Christianity the Spirit of Power. | XII. The Loss of the Soul opposed to temporal acquisitions. |
| V. Christianity the Spirit of Love. | XIII. The Happiness of the Righteous. |
| VI. Christianity the Spirit of Wisdom, and of a sound Mind. | XIV. The Greatness of God, and of his Works. |
| VII. The nature and faculties of the human Soul; and particularly the operations of the Understanding. | XV. The Dissolution of the material System, and the final Consummation of all things. |
| VIII. Of the Will, of Liberty, and particularly of moral Liberty. | XVI. Communion with God explained. |
| | XVII. Of the Reverence a man owes to himself. |
| | XVIII. Of Friendship. |

By the Late Rev. JAMES DUCHAL, D. D.

VOL. I. 322

LONDON:

Printed for A. MILLAR, in the Strand.

MDCCLXII.

315

S E R M O N

USON THE FOLLOWING

2 U R 1 E C T 2



ADVERTISEMENT.

DOCTOR Duchal, a few weeks before his death, having formed a resolution, at the earnest sollicitation of a person he had a high regard for, to print a volume of his Sermons; and having mentioned the particular discourses which he thought of to compose it; his friends who were acquainted with that design, were of opinion it should be carried into execution, with as little delay as the other business of those who had the care of it would admit; and accordingly they now give this volume to the public, without waiting to select any more from that very large and valuable fund they are in possession of; and without waiting for an account of the life of the excellent Author, which they would have wished to have prefixed to it, had a proper one been prepared.

In justice to him, the public must be informed, that the following Sermons were
written

ADVERTISEMENT,

written without any view to the press, and that they are only a specimen of his ordinary weekly labours; neither had he revised any of them, which there is cause to lament, as they certainly would have been much improved had he lived to have published them himself.

The Editors, notwithstanding, flatter themselves, that as they are now offered, they will be thought a valuable present by attentive and judicious readers; and that such will receive much pleasure and improvement from them. If they find that this volume meets with encouragement, they propose to select more volumes; of which the manuscripts in their hands will afford many, perhaps as valuable, and which will probably prove more generally acceptable, as the subjects may be more practical.

The last five Sermons have been added, upon the information of the printer that so many would be requisite to make a full volume; the former thirteen only had been intended by the author, as he expected they would have been sufficient.

T H E

THE CONTENTS.

S E R M. I.

Eternal life the reward of patient continuance
in well-doing.

ROM. II. 7.

*To them who by patient continuance in well-doing
seek for glory, and honour and immortality; eter-
nal life.*

Page 1

S E R M. II.

Moral Perfection the ultimate intention of all
the works and ways of God.

1 COR. III. 9.

*For we are labourers together with God: Ye are
God's husbandry, ye are God's building.* page 27

S E R M. III.

The nature of Enthusiasm, and the marks where-
by the irrational heats of it are to be distin-
guished from a natural and becoming warmth
of affection, and a suitable fervour of spirit in
religion.

2 COR. V. 13.

*For whether we be besides ourselves, it is to God:
Or whether we be sober, it is for your cause.*

page 50

S E R M. IV.

The tendency of the Christian religion to inspire
the mind with strength and vigour in all sea-
sons of difficulty and distress; to preserve it
from what enfeebles it's power; and to ren-
der it fit for all the services of life.

2 TIM. I. 7.

*For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but
of power, and love, and of a sound mind.* page 77

S E R M. V.

The tendency of Christianity to suppress, and
root out all those dispositions which contract
the

C O N T E N T S.

the spirit, and cramp the good affections ; to
excite and strengthen love to one another, and
to engage to all offices of benevolence.

2 TIM. I. 7.

— and of love.

page 106

S E R M. VI.

The tendency of Christianity to deliver men
from what distracts the mind and perverts the
judgment, and to yield that composure and
serenity, which give them the free use of their
rational powers.

2 TIM. I. 7.

— And of a sound mind

page 135

S E R M. VII.

The nature of the human Soul ; that it is a sub-
stance different from matter : Of the faculties
of it, and particularly of the operations of the
understanding.

MATTHEW XVI. 26.

*For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole
world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a
man give in exchange for his soul?*

p. 163

S E R M. VIII.

Of the Will, of Liberty, and particularly of mo-
ral Liberty.

MATTHEW XVI. 26.

For what is a man profited, &c.

p. 189

S E R M. IX.

Of the Affections, their nature, arrangement in
the heart, and operations as springs of action.

MATTHEW XVI. 26.

For what is a man profited, &c.

p. 214

S E R M. X.

Of Reason and Conscience, their power over the
Affections, and particularly of the authority
of Conscience in directing the conduct.

MATTHEW XVI. 26.

For what is a man profited, &c.

p. 239

S E R M.

C O N T E N T S.

S E R M. XI.

Of the loss of the Soul, and the dreadful torments which it may suffer in a future state.

MATTHEW XVI. 26.

——— *And lose his own Soul ?* page 265

S E R M. XII.

The insignificance of all temporal acquisitions, when opposed to future happiness, and purchased by the loss of the Soul.

MATTHEW XVI. 26.

——— *Or what shall a man give in exchange for his Soul ?* p. 290

S E R M. XIII.

The happiness which human nature, by it's various powers and capacities, is made capable of enjoying in a state of perfection, which will be the portion of the Righteous hereafter.

PSALM XXXVI. 8.

They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house, and thou shalt make them drink of the rivers of thy pleasure. p. 316

S E R M. XIV.

The greatness of God and his works, his universal Providence, and the happiness he must enjoy from the execution of the glorious design.

ISAIAH XL. 15.

Behold the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as a small dust of the ballance; behold he taketh up the Isles as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt-offering. All nations before him are as nothing, and they are counted to him less than nothing and vanity. p. 343

S E R M. XV.

Of the dissolution of the material System, and the final consummation of all things.

PSALM CII. 25.

*Of old hast thou laid the foundations of the earth,
and*

C O N T E N T S.

and the heavens are the work of thine hands; they shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture thou shalt change them, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end, the children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee. page 370

S E R M. XVI.

Communion with God explained in a sense not liable to the charge of Enthusiasm.

I JOHN I. 6.

If we say we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth. p. 396

S E R M. XVI.

Of the Reverence a man owes to himself, and the great importance of a just sense of the dignity of human nature, as a preservative from vice, and an incentive to virtue.

I CORINTH. III. 17.

— *For the Temple of God is holy, which temple ye are* p. 428

S E R M. XVIII.

The relation of Friendship considered; the foundation upon which it rests; the particular virtues which qualify for it, and the high happiness resulting from it.

PROVERBS XVIII. 24.

— *There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.* p. 453

S E R M O N

SERMON I.

Eternal life the Reward of patient
Continuance in well doing.

ROM. II. 7.

*To them who by patient continuance in well
doing seek for glory, and honour, and im-
mortality; eternal life.*

THAT the word *eternal* is to be taken here in the strict and proper sense, as signifying duration without end, will plainly appear from many parallel places of scripture; but especially from considering the state of the faithful servants of God who are admitted as heirs of immortality. They are made perfect; they receive the blessedness of the Heavenly state as the reward of patient continuance in well doing upon earth; the reward of an obedi-

B

dience,

SERMON. dience, sincere, though imperfect: But

I. we are taught, that in this state of reward they shall be perfect; that is, delivered finally from all moral infirmity; and have the good affections in lively exercise, without the least mixture of what is impure. Now, in such a state as this, they must be the objects of God's love and high complacential delight. And can it be imagined at all possible, that God, a being of most perfect goodness, and eternally and unchangeably disposed to communicate being and happiness, will ever destroy the being of those whom he loveth, and in whom he constantly delighteth. Every one must at once see that this is impossible, unless we suppose a necessity laid upon him: And who can imagine such a necessity? Or whence can it possibly arise? The holy scriptures speak of great numbers of Angels in heaven, who have retained their purity, innocence, and goodness; who encompass the throne of God, and stand ready as his ministers to execute his commands throughout the universe; creatures endowed with great power, and who enjoy high felicity. Can any one imagine that the father of spirits will destroy the being of any of these? Destroy them though guilty

guilty of no fault, but in all possible re-
S E R M.
pects like the Eternal Father, and beloved I.
of him ! Destroy such exalted creatures
as are indeed the glory of the creation,
and who yield to the Creator, according
to our way of speaking, the highest de-
light ! And may we not reason in the same
manner with respect to the spirits of the
just, who shall be presented before the
presence of divine glory without spot and
blameless ? Their life, no doubt, will be
everlasting ; and tho' the words translated
eternal, are in some places of scripture
manifestly applied to a very long con-
tinued duration, which is not infinite,
but determinable ; yet in the case before
us, what we know of the divine good-
ness, and of the state of the perfected ser-
vants of God, make it very reasonable
for us to think that these words are to be
taken in the strictest sense, as signifying
duration without end. And I can see no-
thing to object against this, unless we
should imagine that the family of God
should so increase in numbers that there
should be no room for them ! A wild
supposition that there should be no room
for them in the immensity of space !

SERMON. Taking it, then, for granted, that the
 I. servants of God shall live through all the
 ages of eternity; I shall in the present dis-
 course, offer what may illustrate the great-
 ness of this object; and then, subjoin
 some reflections which seem to be natural
 and useful.

Eternity has been fitly called a dread-
 ful, pleasing thought. Dreadful it must
 be, unspeakably so, to such as are appre-
 hensive of unhappiness in it. And as
 pleasing surely to such as rejoice in well
 grounded hope. That infinity which is
 incomprehensible by the human mind, and
 is, I may say, overwhelming to it, yet is,
 in its greatness, pleasing; pleasing because
 quite unbounded. To think of existence
 enduring, not only beyond all the power
 of numbers which we can add together,
 all the millions of years or ages which
 figures can comprehend; but that when this
 vast sum of duration is expended, it is but
 just beginning, and as far from a period
 as ever. Let us count out millions of
 ages, as many as there are atoms which
 enter into the composition of the mate-
 rial universe, yet this vast sum is nothing
 to eternity. Nor can human invention
 find out any thing to resemble it. Never,
 never

Of patient Continuance in well doing.

§

never to come to an end, or be nearer it. SERM.

Amazing thought! And is such duration I
to be the portion and inheritance of man? }

It is. *Because I live, you shall live also.*

Live a life immortal like mine. This is infinitely pleasing. How valuable must the gift of happy existence be accounted, as it is never to be recalled! How much to be adored the goodness from which it floweth? But now, in comparison to eternity, what an inconsiderable thing is the time which hath passed since the creation of this world? How much less considerable the life of any of the individuals of mankind? Of this more afterwards.

But let us leave the greatness of this subject, which is too vast for the human mind, to comprehend, or form any adequate idea of, to make some useful reflections upon it.

And first, if God hath intended eternal duration for his servants, we may assure ourselves he hath intended them high happiness in it. Nothing else could suit eternity. In our present state, notwithstanding the strong desire of life which our maker hath wisely and graciously planted in the heart of man, and notwithstanding the natural reluctancies men feel of going

SERM. into a scene they never saw, and the particulars of which they know not ; yet
I how frequently doth a satiety of life creep upon men, and make them even in a cool and dispassionate state of their minds, in a manner tired of it ; and this not only when persons are pressed with great and manifold calamities, not only when the infirmities of age have compassed them about, but in a state and circumstances of life very tolerable, and in which there is evidently great enjoyment. *Solomon* has told us, long ago, *that there is nothing new under the sun* ; and it is not at all unnatural, that the constant repetition of the same things should come in time to sit heavy upon the mind. In the lives of most men, the things which are constantly repeated lie indeed within a very small and narrow compass. We see, it is true, human life, in some respects, a good deal varied in the stages of it ; new tastes in life and new desires appear, together with objects of gratification provided for them ; in infancy, in childhood, in youth and mature age, we see a great variety of desire and taste, of business, and occupation, and pursuits ; and often from maturity to old age, there are such remarkable revolutions

mutations in the state and circumstances of **SERM.**
men, as maketh the world appear in a **I.**

manner new to them. But as that novelty, which is so remarkable and pleasing in infancy and childhood, and gives so great pleasure, insensibly wears off; so doth the novelty of all the particular objects which appear through life. They may, as new, greatly please for a time, but then that pleasure decays, and something else is wanted. But whatever variety, in these instances, may be in life, yet it is in most respects very much the same thing. And, as hath been said, it is not at all unnatural that this should beget satiety. A satiety which I acknowledge our Maker hath ballanced very wisely by some affections he hath planted in us; such particularly as the liking we contract to places we have long frequented, company with which we have long been familiarly conversant: How uneasy are many persons found, who are under a necessity of changing their country, and parting with their old friends? Novelty, often, in such cases, ministers no joy; on the contrary, it is great pain and distress to enter into a new scene. Thus things are wisely ordered by the supreme ruler. But

SERM. after all, it is known, that satiety of life

I. is not intirely kept off by such things.

It doth often grow upon men; and persons who think attentively will be of opinion, that *Solomon's* way of thinking is just, who maketh it one cause why the world is vanity and vexation of spirit, that there is nothing new under the sun. In a word, it is natural that a scene always the same, should be tiresome: It must be so, where there are not objects of delight which effectually fix the mind; or where that which men are engaged in, as their business and labour, does not produce what they highly esteem and value; such as a decent and comfortable provision for the support of life, and for the comfort and convenience of it. And, if it is found that persons contract a satiety of life, even in this short duration of it, how great must that satiety be, if life were continued through many ages; especially, if it were to be without end. But it hath been said, that if there are objects of delight which effectually engage and fix the mind to them, this will prevent any painful satiety from taking possession of it. For no one ever can be tired of an object very dear to him, and in which,

Of patient Continuance in well doing.

9

which, for that reason, his satisfaction SERM.
may be said to be always fresh. And I.
therefore we may conclude it is most suitable to a state of indeterminable duration, that there should be objects of delight upon which the heart shall unalterably fix, and which shall constantly yield most pure and exquisite joy. This will indeed forbid all satiety of being, and render fruition always fresh and flourishing. Such objects, in our present state, even to the worthiest and happiest men, are but few, I speak now of external objects. But it is much to my present purpose, and will prepare us to judge the more justly of the world above, to observe, that our purest joys in this life spring from a consciousness of a right moral state, and from that fruition of our Maker, however it may be comparatively imperfect, of which in our present state we are capable. These, above all things else, relieve the mind from a painful satiety. I do not mean that they make men fond of this life; for the contrary is the truth; they may be the means of making persons earnestly desirous of exchanging this life for another. But if they do not prevent a satiety of mortal life, they effectually prevent all satiety of being.

SERM. being. He who is conscious to himself of

I. a right moral state, who hath excellent dispositions reigning in him, and worthy affections in lively exercise, hath within himself a constant fund of pure delight; and his reflecting thoughts must always give him joy. It is not possible for a person in this case not to have a pleasing relish of existence: And all experience may be appealed to, whether when the powers and affections of the mind are in a proper state and exercise, the heart doth not exult. The internal, the moral beauty must always appear a lovely a ravishing form. And no delight upon earth can be equal to that which a person tasteth, who is justly an object of esteem and love to himself. So *Solomon* observeth, *Prov. xiv. 14.* that *the backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways, and a good man satisfied from himself.* And then the joyful contemplation of the Supreme Being and his perfections, who is the governor of the whole universe, and the maintaining a daily intercourse with him in meditation, and in acts of devotion, greatly elevate the mind, and cast a pleasing light upon existence in every circumstance of it. This fruition of God, however in our present state

Of patient Continuance in well doing.

II

state imperfect, yet must make existence **SERM.**
always appear an invaluable blessing; and **I.**
what doth not admit of painful satiety. 
God is to good men an inexhaustible fountain of joy and happiness, and no object whatsoever can as thoroughly engage the heart. And from what good men taste and experience of this upon earth, they may judge what the perfect in heaven enjoy: Enjoy in a state in which all the powers rational and moral are in the highest perfection, and in which they shall have a most intimate and full fruition of God. This will assuredly fix the mind in constant most rapturous delight. And, as in this kind of enjoyment there can be no excess, neither can there be any satiety. It is impossible to wish or desire other or greater things, than are actually possessed. Both reason and the holy scriptures suggest to us many particulars which may contribute to the happiness of good men, besides this eternal self complacency, and the vision of God, of which more will be said afterwards; but undoubtedly these are the highest and noblest objects of bliss: And existence in such a state must be ever most desirable. Therefore as high happiness doth suit an eternal
duration

SERMON. duration of being, so we see God hath made

I. the noblest provision for us; and we may most assuredly conclude it impossible, that, through an eternal age, there should be any thing like satiety. The spring will be fresh and pleasing when our millions of millions of years are past.

Secondly; if we are to enjoy our excellent powers to an eternal age, and that in the most perfect state of them, how are they to be employed? To which the answer is, undoubtedly in a manner suitable to them, suitable to such a being; in a manner which shall be profitable and pleasing. As to particulars, imagination may suggest innumerable things; but here we are checked, by being taught, that *we know not what we shall be*. Yet plain sense and reason lead us to some general things, which are matters of very pleasing contemplation: We may be clear, I think, that we shall retain the same frame of mind that we have now; the same combination and arrangement of powers and affections, and the same consciousness. Were it not so, we could not be the same creatures at all. These powers, we have reason to think, shall then be much more perfect; but still they are the same powers, the same understanding,

standing, the same will, the same affections, suited all to the state in which men shall then find themselves, and nothing essential to the human mind wanting. SERM. I.

Now let us, if you please, attend to the employment and progress of these powers through an eternal age; and how vast and pleasing the prospect! To begin with the human understanding; we see this in infancy appeareth extremely unfurnished; hath very few ideas, and doth not know what use to make of them; but is capable daily of increasing it's stock, and ripens into that judgment, by which it determines concerning the agreement or disagreement of ideas, between truth and falsehood. We see we are, through the whole of life, capable of increasing our knowledge: Never have we learned so much, but that we may learn more. Nay to this Capacity of increase, imagination itself cannot assign any limit: Suppose life continued ever so long, if the powers remain, new and additional progress, and new acquisitions in knowledge, may be made. And we are taught by the experience of all, that the largest measure of knowledge proveth no burthen, no oppressive burthen to the mind, nor weakens its powers; but that,

on

SERM. on the contrary, the capacity enlargeth

I. with the acquisition, and that men the more they have learned, the more apt they are to learn ; the less their labour, and the easier their progress. If this be the fact, and I think every one will be satisfied that it is, indeed according to the constitution of our minds, that it cannot be otherwise ; what progress may the human understanding make through an endless life ? Let us attend to this. The powers then will be more habile and perfect than they are now ; and the noblest field of contemplation and knowledge will lie open to the mind, a field which is indeed unbounded, namely, God himself in all his works throughout immensity. And in such a state how rich shall men become in the acquisition of knowledge ? This is indeed the proper riches of the understanding ; and the value of it and the delight which it yieldeth, are best known to them who are possessed of its highest degrees. It is true indeed, that knowledge without charity may produce bad effects ; particularly, the Apostle *Paul* saith *it puffeth up*, and we have seen many instances in which a real, or apprehended, large stock of it, hath made men vain and supercilious, sometimes,

times, indeed, intolerably so. But this SERM.
can never be the effect in a state where I.
charity is in the perfection of it ; and
where meekness and humility and all the
most amiable graces adorn every individu-
al. There, the very largest acquisitions of
knowledge can produce no bad effects,
but must yield a very pure and satisfying
Joy. In our present state, the value of it
is seen from the labours which many un-
dergo in pursuing after it ; labours which
perhaps they would not submit to for
any temporal acquisition. But indeed the
present doth not seem to be the state for
acquiring high degrees of knowledge. Our
capacities are in many respects weak ; our
necessary avocations are many ; the bu-
siness of life engages the attention and
powers, the greatest part of our time ;
and many are seen to have no taste for it,
nor any inclination to spend their time in
that pursuit. We are not to imagine that
there shall be any cause for such complaints
in the most perfect state : But that what
is so becoming an improvement of the
human mind, what is so pleasing and use-
ful, shall be then attained with little diffi-
culty, and the taste of it shall be, without
question like the general state, perfect in
its

SERMONS kind: The prospect of this is very

I. pleasing. Yet it is to be observed that whatever value we put upon knowledge in our present state, it is the most beautiful, and the most useful, when applied to the direction of life, and to the service of mankind; and that a person who giveth himself up to contemplation merely, and rests in that as his whole business, is a far lower and more imperfect character, than he who entereth into active life, and applyeth what knowledge he hath to the purposes of it. And whatever the difference may be between the present and future state, particularly, as in the last, there will be no occasion for much of that activity and those services which are necessary in this world; yet we may be sure that powers made and intended for action as well as contemplation, shall have proper business and employment allotted to them; and that every one shall have his proper sphere of activity; but this will be so far from lessening that it will encrease the happiness of that state; it will be so far from weakening that it will strengthen the powers: And particularly, cannot be supposed to be inconsistent with the desirable acquisitions of the understanding, and especially,

ally with that knowledge of the *holy* which S E R M.
is the very summit and crown of all at- I.
tainments of this kind. When we think

of the human mind growing without end in the knowledge of God, and of the works of God, and of all truth and science, it doth indeed wonderfully raise the expectation, and please the believing mind. Never can men be so perfect in this respect, but that they may attain to still higher Degrees. Thus, I think, we may say it must be, while our powers and capacities are the same, essentially the same; while the taste and desire of attaining knowledge continueth. An eternal duration in being, considered in this light, and with these advantages, is indeed a most grand and delightful object; and in which the heart cannot but exult.

Thirdly, there may be a growth in the strength and delicacy of the holy affections, to which we cannot assign any limits. Heaven is represented as a state of perfection, and we see *the spirits of just men*, when they leave this world, are said to be made *perfect*. But I think we are not to imagine that this signifies their being advanced, all at once, to such de-

SERM. grees of perfection, as they shall never to

I. all eternity exceed. Such a state, when compared to our present, may well be called perfect, as in it there is no sin, and men are set free from all moral infirmity, although there may be still great room for moral improvement. The angels in heaven are all perfect, yet there are higher and lower among them, and it could hardly enter into any man's mind, that the lower might not aspire after the attainments of such as are superior to them; those attainments, I mean, which have nothing peculiar in them, and which should appropriate them to a certain order, and the capacities peculiar to it. And, indeed, as the very highest orders are limited and finite creatures, it is hardly to be supposed, that they should ever become incapable of progress in those graces which suit an angelical state: It is hard to suppose that they were, at their first entering into existence, as perfect, in all respects, as ever they shall be through an eternal age. This supposition appears to be very unnatural. And, therefore, though the servants of God shall find their state perfect, when they are taken from this into the other world, and shall be presented without

out spot and blameless before the presence S E R M.
of Divine Glory, with exceeding joy; I.
yet there must be room for growth and
improvement in the perfection of their
state; it is hardly conceivable that it
should be otherwise. For instance, surely
the more men know of God, the more
ardently must they love him; and if their
knowledge of God and his perfections may
grow, certainly their love to him may and
must grow likewise. Again, the more
they know of the works of God, must
not their estimation of the wisdom, and
power and goodness of God, proportion-
ably increase; and can any man imagine
that our knowledge of the works of God,
in this perfect state, will not be always
growing? Is it then to be imagined, that
our views of the Divine Glory and per-
fection will not be enlarging, and that
our admiration and love to God will not
be in proportion to these enlarged views?
Or can it enter into the mind, that ever,
in any one instant, we shall know so much
of this great and incomprehensible object,
that we can know no more? This is not,
I think we may say, cannot be the case
with the most exalted Seraph in Heaven.

SERM. If then our knowledge of God is to grow

I. without end, so likewise is our love, in its
strength and ardor. And we are sure, that in proportion to our love to God, shall our assimilation to him, and our delight in him be. What a prospect is here, and how ravishing ! In the same manner we may reason, concerning that blessed love and good will, by which the inhabitants of the upper world are joined and cemented together. The more perfect we are, the more perfect shall our love and charity be. And the more we love God, the more we shall love the brethren. If the one holy affection groweth, the other shall grow in proportion. And if these affections do at all grow in a perfect state, why shall they not grow to all eternity in it ? We can set no limit to this, more than we can to the duration of an eternal age. And as God hath endowed us with such capacities of intellectual and moral improvement, as admit no certain limit ; so he hath really given more into our possession than any supposable certain measure or degree, which could have been at once conferred ; for, by endless improvement, any such certain measure or degree might
be

be exceeded. Improvement, which seemeth, SERM.
in truth, to admit no bound, no certain I.
bound, is indeed a great thing. We may
likewise apply this to the delicacy of the
affections, and to delicacy of taste. In
this there is an unspeakable variety of
degree. For example, all men know what
excellency and beauty are; all men pro-
fess to discern it in the curious productions
of the statuary, of the painter, and of the
poet. All men profess to admire it in the
moral character; in purity, in generosity,
in faithfulness, in the tenderness of friend-
ship, and such excellencies as these; but
it is apparent that all have not the same
sensations, with respect to strength and
delicacy. Some are but little moved by
the most illustrious characters, and by the
most heroic actions. Others are seduced to
contemplate them with most tender sensi-
bility, and with very great emotions.
So, also, some of the most curious works
of art are passed over by some men with
little attention, while they fix others in
the most pleasing admiration of them.
Now, this taste, though, as all the other
endowments of nature, it is originally the
gift of God, yet is capable of very great
improvement,

SERMON. improvement, by instruction and discipline, by close observation and diligent attention: No one knows to what perfection and delicacy it may be brought by these means. But in a perfect state, how delicate may we suppose the taste for things excellent and lovely to become; and how tender that sensibility? If such delicacy and sensibility may be considered at all as a perfection in the human mind, then we may be sure, in a perfect state, we shall have it to a high degree. We know it may grow and improve as all our other powers; and that the delight arising from it, will be still in proportion to the delicacy of it. How great, then, and continually increasing, that delight? And this we may apply to all objects which are excellent and pleasing; whether our own moral perfection, or that of others, or the glories and perfections of the Supreme Being, or the various particular objects of fruition which are given to us: In proportion to the delicacy of taste, so will the fruition be; and if that delicacy improveth, so in proportion will our happiness grow. Upon the whole, such is our rational prospect of eternity, or a duration without end or limit; in which the
blessed

blest inhabitant of the upper world SERM.
looketh forward without any confinement I.

of his prospect, and foresees the solid and substantial glories of his state growing still brighter and brighter, by an improvement, which in the nature of the thing admitteth no certain limit. Such is eternal existence to the faithful servants of God ; such that *eternal life*, which by a *patient continuance in well doing* we are to seek after. It is, indeed, a subject of contemplation rather too great for the mind in its present state : And as the human mind is formed for delighting in things which are grand and magnificent, so it here findeth an object perfectly suited to its wish. If we were to apprehend any period to our duration at all, this would unhappily cloud our prospect. For be that duration ever so long, it must come at last to a period ; whereas, a state of happiness which knows no end, is perfectly pleasing.

Now, what is the condition upon which we are to obtain all this ? not *bestowing all our goods to feed the Poor*, not *giving our bodies to be burned* ; Thanks be to God, we have no such trials of our integrity ; but a *patient continuance in well doing*. A

SERM. course in life which while it ensures to

I us the glories of the upper world, is likewise greatly to the advantage of our present state; which, were there no other world to be expected, a wise man would choose; and which indeed, in the nature of things, is necessary to make us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. Surely God hath dealt bountifully with the sons of men. They are *the chief of his ways* in this world, and accordingly hath he regarded them, and done for them. Intending them for an eternal duration, he hath to this suited the provision he hath made for them. Happy are all those, who at this day are in actual possession of what God hath promised to all who love him. They see and know in another manner than we can, and no doubt enjoy what is much above our most exalted prospects, and hopes. And happy the persons who are in the way to such high advancement; and in whom human nature appeareth in its proper dignity and lustre, as forming and preparing them for the world above. But then, what pity is it, that such a frame, and such powers, should be prostituted and profaned by wicked works;

works; and that such generous and great S E R M.

hopes, should be given up for any vitious I.
and sinful gratification whatsoever, in
compliance with the *lusts of the eye*, or
the lusts of the flesh, or *the pride of life*?

A poor price, such gratification, for the prospect, the rational prospect of immortality! There is infinity of value in what these children of folly give up for poor, mean, and contemptible pleasures and enjoyments. But alas! What shall we do for that discernment which would rescue us from all such folly? And that generosity of spirit, which would make us abhor what is mean and unworthy of us; and which would, with enlarged and elevated views, prepare us for the uniform practice of virtue, as meat and drink to us? O! that the *spirit of power*, and of *love*, and of a *sound mind*, might thoroughly possess our souls; and that the blessed genius of Christianity were our guide in all our ways! However, whether *we will hear*, or whether *we will forbear*, these great things are clearly set before us; and according to the reception they now meet with from us, it will be with us hereafter. For the Apostle hath taught us,
that

SERM. that as those, who by patient continuance in
I. well doing, seek for glory, and honour, and
 immortality, shall inherit eternal life. So
 for them who do not obey the truth, but obey
 unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tri-
 bulation and anguish, are in reserve, for
 every soul of man that doth evil.

S E R M O N

S E R M O N II.

Moral Perfection the ultimate Intention of all the works and ways of God.

I C O R. III. 9.

For we are labourers together with God; ye are God's Husbandry, ye are God's Building.

WHILE the Apostle in the words of the text, calleth Christians God's husbandry and God's building, it will bring to our minds two figurative representations of the church, which are frequently met with in the holy scriptures, namely, it is called a vine yard, and an house or temple. I shall not need to quote any particular passages, for these figures often occur. The former intended

ed

SERM. ed to express that fruitfulness in the

II. works of piety, righteousness, and charity, which may be expected from such as have been more particularly cared for and cultivated, and who are represented as *trees which the Lord hath planted, and which he watereth, and pruneth*; the other figure rather denoting, what is the greatest of all privileges the Church enjoyeth, that of being *the habitation of God through the spirit*. The church is the temple, the living temple, of the living God. And, agreeably to this figurative representation of the church, we read of being *built up or edified*; and whatever tendeth to the growth and progress of christians, is said to edifie them; and they themselves are represented as *living or lively stones*, and to be *built up a spiritual house*; and it is in the same figurative way of speaking that our blessed Saviour is represented to be the *chief corner stone of the building*. It is in a very poetical strain that the Prophet Isaiah expresseth himself upon this subject, in Chap. liv. 11: *O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted; Behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy*

of all the Works and Ways of God.

29

thy foundations with sapphires ; and I will SERM.
make thy windows of agate, and thy gates II.
of carbuncle, and all thy borders of pleasant
stones. And all thy children shall be taught

of the Lord ; and great shall be the peace
of thy Children. This great work of God,
in supporting and promoting the cause of
virtue and true religion, and in bringing
many sons unto glory, as the Author of
the Epistle to the Hebrews speaketh, is
undoubtedly the most excellent and im-
portant of all his works in this world ;
and this is what I shall, in the first place,
in this discourse particularly, illustrate.

Secondly shew, in consequence of this,
that we are not capable of any services of
so great moment, as those by which this
great work is in any sort promoted and
carried on ; and, Lastly, shall make some
practical reflections upon the subject. I
am in the first place to shew, that this
building of God is the most excellent and
important of all his works in this world.
To this purpose it will not be improper
to take a general view of God's works in
this world, and the subordination of them
to one another, with respect to the ends
they are destined to serve ; as the inferior
orders

SERM. orders appear plainly to be made for the

II. use of those which are in rank above them.

We see the whole vegetable world is supported and sustained by the earth, which is seasonably moistened from the clouds, that it may bring forth the various kinds of herbage, with which the face of it is covered. All this herbage is plainly contrived for the sustenance of the world of life; and adapted by its variety to answer to the instincts of the several kinds; by which instincts the individuals of each kind are directed to what is proper for them. We cannot but think that animal life is a much more noble and excellent thing, than that of the plant of the field; and that there is a plain fitness and congruity in it, that this kind of life should be supported and sustained by those various productions of the earth, which would be in a manner insignificant, if they were not used to this purpose. When, again, we contemplate the various orders of animal life, as we see most of them are formed for subsisting by the herb of the field, or by the fruit of the tree, so others are as plainly formed for preying upon animals of an inferior order; which is apparent-

parently the case with respect to the fishes S E R M.
of the sea, and several of the fowls of II.

the air, and beasts of the earth which are
creatures of prey, and make no use of
herbage, but feed upon other animals, and
are admirably fitted for this way of life,
by those arms and instruments of death
with which the Author of Nature hath
furnished them, and the superior strength
with which he hath endowed them. It
must have been plainly the original inten-
tion, that these kinds which are formed
for prey should be thus supported. These
things are often taken notice of in the
holy scriptures, and the admirable con-
trivance and wisdom of the Creator ap-
pearing in them, celebrated in very fit
and proper strains. *Thou makest darkness,*
saith the Psalmist, civ. 20. and it is night,
wherein all the beasts of the Forest do creep
forth; the young Lions roar after their prey,
and seek their meat from God. The Sun
ariseth they gather themselves together, and
lay them down in their dens; Man goeth forth
to his work, and labour until the evening.
O Lord, how manifold are thy works, in
wisdom hast thou made them all; the earth
is full of thy riches. So is this great and
wide

SERMON. *wide sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable,*

II. *both great and small beasts. There is that Leviathan whom thou hast made to play therein. These all wait on thee, that thou mayest give them their meat in due season. That thou givest them, they gather; thou openest thy hand, they are filled with good. And so in many other places.*

But what we are particularly to observe is, that by the Creator's donation, all these inferior orders are given into the power and possession of Man; not only the plant of the field, and the fruit of the trees, which he shareth with the brutal creation, but likewise the brutal creation or world itself. These are given him, as well as the herb, and fruit of the field, for his food and cloathing, and for his service and entertainment. And how wonderfully are the several kinds fitted for the various uses of mankind? The Ox, the Camel, the Horse, the Elephant. Tho' some of these are of great strength, and could soon destroy feeble man; yet so the wise and gracious Lord of the universe provided, that these creatures, endowed with such strength, and many of them in their natures fierce, yet are capable of being

ing tamed and trained up to the service SERM.
of man, and they have particular instincts II.
and affections which make them fit for
this. *The Ox, saith the Prophet Isaiah,*
knoweth his owner, and the Ass his master's
crib. On the other hand, man endowed
with the use of reason and with sagacity
and invention, is fit to exercise the do-
minion which the Creator hath given him
over them, and maintain it. The strength
of the Leviathan and the Elephant, does
not procure to these creatures which are
called the chief of the ways of God, an
exemption from their subjection to man-
kind. The Horse, the Ox, are taught
with meekness and patience to serve them.
And the very birds and several beasts of
prey are taught, to take and kill their prey
for the use of their master. Upon the
whole, we see that as the vegetable life is
contrived and formed for the support of
the animal, so both vegetable and animal
are contrived and formed for the support
of man, and accordingly are put into his
power. Thus, as the superior excellency
of human nature appeareth from the ex-
cellency of those powers with which it is
endowed, so its high rank in the crea-
tion

SERMON, and the estimation of it with the

II. Creator, is evidently seen in that dominion over all, which is given to the children of men; whom the whole world is taught to acknowledge as the Lords of it.

But to pursue this argument a little farther, wherein doth the excellency of man principally consist? Not surely either in strength or beauty; not even in understanding and sagacity; though these are valuable distinctions; but in goodness and righteousness, in that which is the likeness and image of his maker upon him. This is indeed his glory. Without this all other instances of his pre-eminence over the brutes serve only to render his state infamous and himself abominable. His being at the very summit of the sublunary creation, or his sinking into a state below that of the brutes which perish, really dependeth upon his being righteous or wicked, and nothing else. Now, the plain consequence of all is this, that as all the world was made for man, and as there is nothing really excellent in man but holiness, righteousness, and goodness, so the whole world hath been contrived

trived and formed as a theatre in which S E R M.
these might obtain and prevail ; and with- II.
out direct respect to these, and to the
happiness annexed to them, it would not
have had a being. The relations of things
in the world plainly point this out. So
that this building of God, of which the
Apostle speaketh, that is, the interest of
truth, piety, and virtue, were the very
end for which the work of creation was
designed and executed.

But why may we not extend our
thoughts beyond this world ? Must not
the case be the same with respect to all
worlds and systems whatsoever, whether
more low and gross like ours, or more
spiritualized and refined ? Is it conceive-
able that there can be any thing in them
more excellent than righteousness and
purity, or any thing in them to be com-
pared with it ? And must not this then,
and the happiness enjoyed by the crea-
tures possessed of it, be the end, the sole
end, of the Creator in making these
worlds ? Can any one assign another end
equal to this ? Any one but this which is
worthy of the Creator ? From which it
will follow, that without this as the great

SERM. end, and therefore the original motive,

II. the universe itself would have had no existence? All this appears to me evidently just, and founded upon unquestionable principles; and must not that be indeed excellent and important, for the sake of which the universe hath its being, and without a view to which it never would have been made? I think this must strike the attentive, and shew them with what earnestness they ought to pursue after righteousness and moral perfection, and how high it must stand in the estimation of our Creator; not only as the most excellent thing we can conceive, but that for the sake of which alone this vast universe was brought into being: After what hath been said, it will not be wondered at, for it must be expected, that the whole conduct of providence should be calculated to promote righteousness; that this should be the end and intention of the laws of God; that it should be the ultimate intention of all the dispensations of providence; and that the supreme Arbiter of the universe should, by all possible means, promote righteousness in his own creation;

tion : Nor can we wonder at the most ex-S B R M.
traordinary interpositions to serve this II.

end. These have indeed been many, and very wondrous: But the most extraordinary is, that God spared not his own Son, but gave him up to the death, for this sole purpose. He came from Heaven to destroy and overthrow the kingdom of satan, and of darkness, and to erect a kingdom of truth and righteousness in the world. He came by death to destroy him that had the power of death, and to deliver them, who through fear of death were all their life time subject to bondage.

Heb. iii. 14. This event doth wonderfully illustrate God's love of righteousness. It must be a great and most important purpose, which the infinite wisdom of God would serve, in such a way as this. No interposition, which can be imagined, is like it. It really overwhelms the mind with wonder. But, then, on the other hand, when we consider moral excellency, and perfection, as the greatest thing in the works of God, and that for the sake of which alone, the universe hath a being, we cannot wonder that the wisdom

SERMON. God would take every possible measure
II. to promote it; and we shall become
thoroughly reconciled to the scriptural
accounts of the incarnation, the suffer-
ings, the death, resurrection, and king-
dom of our Saviour; how surprising so-
ever these accounts may appear: This
rests upon an unquestionable principle,
that it becometh the wisdom of God, to
serve that which is the end of the crea-
tion by any means, how extraordinary
soever, which the creation can afford.
This is plainly natural.

But, as the conclusion of this head, let
me observe, that what hath been said
upon it, hath been said to very little pur-
pose, unless it hath some influence in
begetting, or increasing in our hearts the
love of righteousness, as a thing of
the greatest excellency, and of the very
greatest importance. Could we but see as
we ought to do, how should we love what
is morally excellent, how should we hate
what is morally deformed and vile! The
very being of the universe bears testi-
mony in favour of it; and all its magni-
ficence, and glory, sheweth us, what an
excellent

excellent thing moral righteousness is; **SERM.**
and, the language of every heart har- **II.**

moniseth with the voice of nature, and of the universe; in every conscience, there is a witness to it. How much, then, are we out of nature, if we do not love it? How much more, if we dislike, and, corrupted by our lusts, have conceived an aversion against it? If we love to walk in the crooked and perverse paths of vice and immorality, and to do those things which are evil; thwarting and contradicting the design of nature, and of the God of nature, and becoming stains in the creation, instead of being ornaments to it. And, how ought we to detest those lusts, which tend to lead us so far astray? These are in truth, our enemies, they are our ruin and destruction. Let us never be at peace with them, give them no harbour in our breasts, but with a pious, which is likewise a most generous disdain, cast them out.

I come now to the second subject of discourse, namely, that we are not capable of any services of so great moment, as those by which this great work is promoted and carried on. This is no more

SERMON. than a just and necessary consequence of

II. what I have been endeavouring to illustrate. For surely, if that great building of God, is the most important of all his works, then those services and offices, by which it is carried on, may well be said to be of the greatest moment. God might, no doubt, have communicated much perfection and happiness to individuals, without having joined them together in those connections with, and relations to one another, which we see fixed in the present plan of his administration. But a little thinking and attention, will convince us, that such a state of things must be far from being as excellent and happy as the present, which giveth so large occasion for the exercise of benevolent affections, and of beneficence, the noblest things which we can frame any idea of, and the most divine. As things are now ordered, individuals cannot work out the work of their own salvation, without assisting others. They cannot perform the duties required of them, without being helpful to their neighbours. Many of the duties required of each person have a direct reference to others, and the good and advantage

vantage of others, is plainly the object SERM.
pursued. And as God hath given us laws II.

and precepts binding those social duties upon us, so he has originally planted in the heart of man affections which are strong incentives to services of this kind, and in the exercise of which, we taste the purest pleasure and joy. Thus we are joined together, and the great building of God is carried on by the means, and instrumentality of what the individuals, each in his place, contribute to the completion of it. This is a subject much insisted on in the holy scriptures, particularly in the writings of the Apostle *Paul*: He compareth the body of Christ, that is, the Church, to the natural body, in which many members are joined together in one System, in different stations; as eyes, ears, hands, feet, and every member, hath its particular office and function assigned it for the good of the whole; and no member can be cut off from the body, but the body must suffer: So, says he, *1 Cor. xii. 27. Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular; members one of another.* Now, I say, what men contribute by their services to the completion and perfection of the building of God, may

SERM. may well be considered as the most im-

II. portant services of human life. Is there not great honour in being workers together with God, for so in the holy scriptures his servants are called? To an ingenious mind, it must be a strong incentive to action, that men are made capable, and have an opportunity of assisting in that which is more peculiarly the work of God. Surely, nothing can be more honourable than this relation to him, who is the most high, the possessor of heaven and earth. Is not the end of the whole, the eternal perfection and happiness of that great body, the very greatest of all interests, the very greatest we can conceive? Is any thing equal to it? Do we not, in acting our part aright, gratify the most honourable and excellent affections of the heart, and the most divine? And, do we not find our own private account likewise in all this, and lay up a good foundation for ourselves against the time to come, that we may lay hold on eternal life? But let us consider these works and services, by which the building of God is perfected and compleated in the comparative light, and see how they appear

appear when compared with our other SERM. works, the object of which is temporal, II. the influence of which doth not reach beyond this world; and to judge aright in this matter, let us imagine our selves, so far as imagination in our present low state will carry us, let us imagine our selves, I say, beholding the great building of God, as at the last, in all its parts perfected. A vast body joined together by the bonds of sacred love, in the most perfect delight and harmony of spirit; each enjoying human nature, himself in the most perfect state of it, and each rejoicing in the perfection and happiness of his neighbour; the very best affections exercised, and which yield the highest and purest delight, without interruption; all the desires of knowing and conversing with the noblest objects, gratified to the utmost; and above all, each individual filled with all the fullness of God. Imagine we see this glorious assembly in this happy state, and having the perpetuity of it ensured by the unchangeable goodness of God, and by His express declarations and promises; how glorious is the object? What external light
and

SERMON. and splendor may be shed upon them, of

II. which the scriptures in some places speak in high strains, we know not; nor, indeed, is any thing of this kind much connected with rational and human felicity. But whatever advantages of this sort may contribute to their happiness, we may be sure the servants of God will enjoy; and we are particularly taught, that they will be fashioned like the glorious body of Christ; and will have an external form suitable to the perfection of the mind. Now, I say, let us imagine our selves beholding this glorious body; and surely, there must be the most pleasing satisfaction attending the consciousness of our having laboured, as we had opportunity, while upon earth, in carrying on the great work. Of this labour, there shall be the most honourable and lasting monuments. Let us compare with it, those labours of which the fruit is intirely confined to this world; and in the comparative light, it really appeareth of little significance. One person has risen early, and sat up late, and has eaten the bread of sorrow, and care, and anxiety all his days; his design has been to make a great fortune;

fortune; I suppose he has succeeded, yet at that period, we are now imagining what is become of it, where doth it appear? SERM.
II.

Another has raised himself to an high and honourable station upon earth, and great power, and authority; a third, has, perhaps, made great conquests, made the world about him tremble; but, what is now become of that power and authority, and of these acquisitions? They are no more. As the Poet speaketh, *they are gone like the baseless fabric of a vision, and not a wreck or ruin left behind.* This is the case, in fine, with respect to all the children of this world. The mere children of it, they have bustled, they have incessantly laboured; but all is gone forever, and no memorial left. Far otherwise is it, indeed, with the Children of wisdom, whose works of piety, and virtue, are an everlasting foundation; and, who shall forever rejoice in the fruits of their righteousness, and charity; and, therefore, must reflect upon life with exquisite pleasure and satisfaction. By all this, is not meant, that negligence of the affairs of this world, is a virtue, or that men should be indolent, thoughtless, and without concern

SER M.cern about the business of it. No; reli-

II.  gion teaches us no such thing; on the contrary, teaches us to be diligent and industrious. But, when men, merely with a view to this world, labour and toil, their works are really of little significancy, or moment, when compared with those of which the fair monuments will be everlasting. And indeed, religion will teach us the happy art, so to conduct life, and the business of it, that this may well be brought into the account of our works of righteousness, and religious obedience. Where men act their part with sincere piety of intention, and with a direct design of serving the true ends of life, this halloweth and consecrateth the whole, as service done to God, and it shall be accordingly accepted and rewarded. But the mere labours of this world, and in pursuance of the spirit of it, are of small account, when compared with those works, which make a part of the building of God, and which will appear in their glory, when not only the pyramids of *Egypt*, but the everlasting mountains, and the perpetual hills, shall be no more; and

and earth, and all the works in it, shall be lost in one common ruin. SERM.
II.

I shall now conclude the discourse with some few reflections.

First, we see the great thing in which we should labour for ourselves and others; namely, carrying on, so far as we have power and influence, the work and building of God, the cause and interest of truth and virtue. Upon this our hearts ought to be set; and all ends and purposes of an inferior nature, are to be pursued in subordination to this. The professors of the religion of Christ, have been in the several ages of the Christian church, divided, unhappily divided, into many parties, and denominations, and have used various modes of worship, various rites and ceremonies. Some have come nearer primitive simplicity; some have been very distant from it. But it is still to be supposed, that all who are sincere, though in different ways, and by different means, aim at the same great end, the edifying of the body of Christ. And so far as we have attained, we are in this respect to walk by the same rule, and to mind the same things; those things in which

SEE M. which the sincere may differ among them-

H. selves, can, indeed, be but of small moment, when compared with those, in which they do, and must agree; and if there are, who value themselves more upon their being of this or that denomination of Christians, than upon their being Christians, they know not yet the true Christian Spirit. What we are to labour most, for ourselves and others, is, that we may be good men, that we may be living members of the body of Christ: Upon this great thing our zeal ought principally to be bestowed; and other things of lesser importance are to be attended to, only in subordination to this. And, Oh! How happy must be the state of things in that world, where peace and good will shall eternally reign; and when there either shall be no difference of opinion and sentiment, or that difference shall be no wise hurtful.

In the mean time, we know but in part, and are liable to very great errors and mistakes; and while Christians are in fact, divided into various parties, and denominations, so far as we are called to

act

act our part in such matters, there is no-**SERM.**
thing left for us, but that among the con- **II.**
tending parties, we should judge for our-
selves, what is most agreeable to the will
of God, what may most effectually an-
swer the declared ends of religion, and to
follow that with sincerity; in the mean
time, maintaining love and charity to-
wards all, of whatever denomination,
who call upon the name of the Lord out
of a pure heart.

SERMON III.

The nature of Enthusiasm, and the marks, whereby the irrational heats of it are to be distinguished from a natural and becoming warmth of affection, and a suitable fervour of spirit in religion.

2 COR. V. 13.

For whether we be besides ourselves, it is to God: Or, whether we be sober, it is for your cause.

WE find from several passages in the Epistles to the Corinthians, particularly in this last, that there was in that Church a strong party, who were very unfavourable to the Apostle *Paul*, endeavouring to detract from his character, and lessen the value

value of his labours, exalting others at his expence, who were content to be the leaders and heads of such a party. Against these factious persons, and especially the heads of them, the Apostle writeth, in the vindication of himself, with great warmth, and representeth the part they acted, and the principles upon which they acted, as very corrupt, animadverting upon them, with a severity which was perfectly just. And it is very probable, he had these persons in his eye in this passage; for in the preceding verse, he tells the Corinthians, *for we commend not ourselves again to you, but give you occasion to glory on our behalf, that you may have something to answer them, which glory in appearance and not in heart*; which plainly refers to those false Apostles, who had occasioned such divisions in the Church; and, as it is likely enough, that some of them might represent him as an enthusiast, or, a madman, he very properly lets them know, that whatever he was, and whatever part he had acted, whether it should appear distracted, or sober, it all flowed from a principle of zeal for God, of love to men, and concern for their salvation.

SER M. salvation. *For whether we be besides our-*

III. *selves, it is to God, or whether we be sober, it is for your cause.* As if he had said, these

men may say what they will of us, but we are conscious to ourselves, that what we have done is from the best and worthiest principles, and such as always ought to obtain in every Christian, and especially became persons entirely devoted to Christ in the ministry of the gospel, adding in the fourteenth verse, *for the love of Christ constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live to themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.*

The charge or imputation which the Apostle here insinuateth, had been laid against him, has been brought against many others, who, while they acted upon the best principles, and agreeable to the soundest wisdom, have been looked upon as persons bereaved of their senses. But as the wisdom of this world is foolishness in the sight of God, so, indeed, that which is wisdom in his sight, hath been often looked upon as foolishness in the world.

Men

Men who have not a sense of God upon their minds, and are not animated by his love, who set little value upon holiness, and virtue, which are our highest glory and happiness, who look upon present enjoyments only as substantial, and have their portion upon earth, entirely negligent of that which is to come; when they see persons acting upon the principles of the Christian religion, and walking by faith, and in pursuance of this, making it their constant principal study and care to please God, and to advance themselves in virtue, for this cause denying themselves, and submitting to many severities in the course of their lives, looking down with contempt upon all interests which come into competition with a good conscience, and even ready to sacrifice their lives in support of the cause of truth and virtue; when they see persons, I say, acting in this manner, no wonder they should look upon them as besides themselves, and in a kind of distraction. Especially, it must appear to be madness, to such as are professed unbelievers, and who pay no regard to those sacred truths, by which the lives of the

SERM. disciples of Christ are to be entirely regulated. But, tho' many, who may be
III. accounted by the unthinking and unbelieving world, madmen, are in truth, in matters of religion, acting the wisest part, and laying up for themselves a good foundation, that they may lay hold on eternal life; yet it is certain, that there have been many instances in the world of such enthusiasm, as is really a religious phrenzy, and by which men have been led, into the greatest, and wildest extravagancies; when reason seemeth to have been in a great measure lost, and a furious unbridled imagination hath carried all before it. This most dangerous distemper, of the mind, hath in some persons risen to a very frightful degree, and which no sober observer could behold without amazement; but there are degrees of it less perceptible, which yet may be very hurtful. And, there is not, perhaps, any point, in which our pains can be better bestowed, than in learning how to distinguish between an enthusiastic spirit, and that warmth, and those ardors of holy affection, that fervor

fervor and intention of the powers in SERM.
matters of religion, which have their III.
foundation in reason and truth, and which

are perfectly according to right nature. This is the more necessary, as there may be some danger, when men would avoid enthusiasm, of running into the other extreme, and looking upon all religious fervor of spirit, and the lively exercise of the best and worthiest affections, as unnatural; hence, contracting a coldness and indifference in all such matters, a perfect languor, and a kind of a paralytic state of mind, if I may use such an expression, and which undoubtedly, must be of the worst consequence.

I shall, therefore, make some observations upon enthusiasm, tending to explain the nature of it; and shall, in the next place, shew how different a thing this is from those lively feelings of heart, that warmth of affection, and fervor of spirit in religion, which as they are perfectly natural and rational, so are of the greatest use, while at the same time, they yield the greatest pleasure.

Enthusiasm, in general, may be understood to signify a man's acting under

SERM. an apprehension of a present divine energy upon his mind, to which all his powers are supposed to be subjected, and by which he is carried on, without attention to any thing else as his guide. It is easy to see what effects this must produce, where a person is mistaken in such apprehension. We read in the Antients, many accounts and descriptions of enthusiasm, in which we see, they looked upon it as attended frequently, not only with great and uncommon emotions of mind, but, likewise, with wonderful agitations of body, which were said to be the effect of the Divinity then possessing the persons, all their speeches and actions, at that time, directed by that power, upon which they themselves had no influence. We read, in the history of the Old Testament, likewise, of the Prophets of *Baal*, and of the Prophets of the groves; and you see, in the first book of *Kings*, and eighteenth Chapter, that *Elijah*, the Prophet of the true God, called upon them to put that great matter which was in debate between him and them, concerning what God the *Israelites* were to worship, to a fair trial; proposing, that

that they should choose one bullock, and S E R M. he another, for sacrifice, that each should prepare it in their own way, but that no fire should be put under them upon the altar ; and that the God, who being called upon, should answer by a miraculous fire, to consume the sacrifice, should be acknowledged for the true God. The Prophets of *Baal*, whether obliged to put the matter to this issue by the people, or confident in the power of their God, gave their consent to this proposal ; and, indeed, it would seem from their calling so long upon *Baal*, and using their strange frantic methods of prevailing with him, that they imagined he might answer them. *But there was neither voice, as the historian tells us, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded.* But what I quote this passage for, is, the account the historian giveth us of their behaviour. *They cried aloud, they leaped upon the altar, they cut themselves with knives, and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them ; this, in their language, was called prophesying.* Strange imagination, that such frantic behaviour, should be an effectual method of engaging

SERM.ing the Divinity to appear for them.

III. Some modern instances there have been of enthusiasm, even in the christian world, where persons have thought themselves inspired, where they have uttered prophecies, and where the extasies, they have been in, have been attended with very strange convulsions, and agitations of body, and the whole scene was quite unnatural. A famous late instance of this, in a neighbouring kingdom, shewed evidently, that the persons who were principally concerned, did really believe they were inspired; and in making this pretence, did not knowingly impose upon the world; for they uttered a prophesy, that one of their brethren, who was lately dead, should be miraculously raised to life again, and the very day when this should be done was predicted; and nothing but the event, which did not at all answer, could convince them that this was all delusion. Such is the power of an imagination which enthusiasm hath inflamed. But the true Prophets of God always have been, and always will be distinguished from such enthusiasts, by credentials fully sufficient to convince,
not

not themselves only, but all the atten-SERM:
tive and impartial world about them. III.

And so it was you see, in the case of *Elijah* already mentioned, when contending with the Prophets of *Baal*. When at the time of offering the evening sacrifice, he drew near, and called upon the God of *Israel*, praying, that he might appear in vindication of his own honour, he was answered by fire from heaven, which miraculously descended, and consumed the burnt offering.

But, not to enlarge upon such wild extravagancies of enthusiasm, let us consider some of the less remarkable kinds of it, which may be very hurtful to persons who are under its power; what can tend to lead men more astray, than judging of their state towards God, from certain vehement emotions excited upon some occasions in their souls, sudden and unaccountable transports of joy, and strong impressions made upon their spirits, for which they can assign no good reason? How bold and assured have some men become by these, whose lives were not at all answerable to such pretensions? Surely, the plain way to judge concerning

SERM. concerning ourselves, and our real state
III. towards God, is to consider the terms
of our acceptance, which are laid before us in the holy scriptures, and to try whether we have come up to them. To look into the distinguishing characters of those who are born of God, and of the new nature, and to see whether they are found upon us; to try whether the spirit of Christ dwelleth in us, by the fruit of it, which is in all goodness, and righteousness and truth; in a word, to try whether the love of God and charity, whether purity, meekness, temperance, patience, and the other graces, are found in us; and thence to pronounce concerning our selves. But to neglect those things, and depend upon strong impressions unaccountably made upon our minds, or some sudden and vehement emotions, may delude us indeed to our ruin. These may well be called enthusiasm. Again, it hath been the mistaken way of some very good and serious persons to judge concerning the success of their prayers, and their being answered, from the present impressions made upon their minds, and emotions

raised in them ; and some have carried this so far, as to take upon them to predict certain future events, from what they felt in themselves in prayer. For this, as there is no warrant from reason, or scripture, so many have found themselves grievously mistaken ; and the events have not at all answered their expectation. In the same sort, some have taken their counsels and measures for the conduct of life from such impressions made upon them, and have gone on, as under a kind of inspiration, when a little attention to sound reason would have fully convinced them that they were wrong. And how many have governed themselves, almost intirely, in the very greatest undertakings, by strong impulses which they look'd upon as an immediate call from the spirit of God ? And to add no more instances, even in matters of speculation, and with respect to truth and error, men have been determined by inward impressions, rather than by evidence appearing to the mind ; and have framed their judgment by what they felt, rather than what they saw, and discerned of proof. Nay, some have taught

SERM. taught that faith itself, the faith of the
III. gospel, was to be considered as a thing
 infused into the mind; and in this sense
 understand the phrases in scripture, where
 it is said to be the gift of God. Mean-
 ing, that a strong persuasion was begot
 in the mind, though men could give no
 reason at all for it, a persuasion they
 knew not why. And many have in this
 unreasonable persuasion, with respect to
 particular tenets, been most furiously zea-
 lous, when a little calm and impartial en-
 quiry would have shewn them that they
 were quite wrong. Much of such zeal
 there hath been in the world, which had
 no foundation but such enthusiasm, and
 accordingly it hath been found in all
 parties, and religious denominations. But
 it was not my intention to go through
 all the kinds of enthusiasm, or mention
 all the instances of it, which would be
 a very laborious task, and to very little
 purpose; these instances, which I have
 taken notice of, are enough to shew you
 what I mean by enthusiasm; vehement
 and strong impressions, and impulses,
 which are supposed to be from the spirit
 of God. And in all such, there is this
 to

to be observed, that the rational powers SERM.
have little or nothing to do with them; III.

no inquiry, no calm deliberation, no comparing things with the maxims of reason, or the first principles of religion, so as to form a rational judgment; but the mind carried vehemently along, all giving way to what is thought to be a divine energy. And, indeed, the mind in such persons loseth in a great measure the free exercise of its powers, and is generally in a state of tumult and perturbation, which not only extravagant and wild imaginations, but even violent agitations of the body, do often demonstrate; and, when the serenity and composure of the mind are thus lost, it is no wonder it should become the sport of capricious fancy, and be hurried into any wildness of thought or action.

I cannot help observing, in conclusion, that enthusiasm, in the proper sense of that word, which I have endeavoured to explain to you, seems to owe its rise to a principle, which is not only true, but of great importance, namely, that of a divine agency upon the minds of men. Enthusiasm evidently goes upon this principle,

SERMON. principle, though it most grievously mis-

III. applieth it. That there is such an agency of the Supreme Being upon the minds of men, is not to be doubted. The holy scriptures speak of it in the strongest terms, and it is perfectly consistent with reason. We find in numberless instances, that God hath declared his will to his servants in an extraordinary manner, and by immediate revelations; not only making known to them what he would have them to do, but predicting future events, which no understanding of a mortal could have foreseen. And though we cannot tell how they discerned these things to be the inspirations of the Almighty, yet no doubt, the persons thus inspired were fully satisfied, so that it was not possible for them not believe. And where the world about them were concerned in these revelations, the Prophets were furnished with sufficient credentials to convince all impartial enquirers of the reality of them. Now, we have no reason to expect such extraordinary revelations; but have still reason to expect, and must still depend upon, the assistance of the

Spirit

Of Enthusiasm.

65

Spirit of God in an ordinary way, that SERM.
is, by countenancing and aiding us in III.
the use of the powers which he hath
given us, which undoubtedly he can
strengthen. Our understandings, our af-
fections, our active powers, are all his
workmanship; in his hand they are, by
his power they are subsisted; and he,
who gave them, can no doubt assist us
in the use of them, and it is what he
hath graciously promised to do. But it
will be a sure preservative from the
abuse of this principle to the purposes
of enthusiasm, to remember always, that
the spirit of God worketh upon the minds
of men by the means of their rational
powers, and not without them; that he
deals with them as reasonable creatures
which are to believe upon evidence, and
to act upon principle; that he enlightens
the understanding to discern objects a-
right, but does not beget persuasion with-
out discernment; that he assists men in
acting, but does not prompt them by
blind and unaccountable impulses; that
his operations are all uniform, and
of a piece, perfectly consonant to right
reason and unchangeable truth; that he
F doth

SERM. doth not cause tumults in, and perturbation of mind, but so influenceth, as
 III. to preserve the serenity and composure of it. But this matter will be further explained by what is to be said upon the next head of discourse, which was, to shew how different from enthusiasm those lively feelings of heart are, that warmth of affection and fervor of spirit in religion, which, as they are perfectly rational and natural, so are of the greatest use, while at the same time they yield the greatest pleasure.

It hath been already observed, that while men studiously avoid enthusiasm, they may be in danger (for such is the weakness of human nature in its present state) of falling into the contrary extreme, and contracting a culpable languor and insensibility of spirit in matters of religion; which ought always to be considered as a most dangerous distemper, as it seemeth to be a very general one in the present age.

Warmth of affection towards God and the Redeemer, emotions of spirit in contemplating the divine greatness and goodness, and the astonishing scenery of the
 invisible

invisible world, which the gospel hath SERM.
presented to us as the objects of our III.

faith, are not only rational, and natural, and manly, but, indeed, may be said to be the necessary concomitants of a lively faith, and a serious attention to those objects; and that there should be a rapturous joy in a rational and just application of the gospel promises, to ourselves, is obvious and indisputable. It is true, indeed, these feelings will, in different persons, be different, according to the greater or less sensibility of their spirits, and delicacy of their sensations. But, where there is any sensibility, where there are any affections which become humanity, surely, such objects, as I have now mentioned, must, if seriously attended to, excite them to the most lively exercise. To illustrate this, let us attend a little to the frame and workings of our minds in other respects, and towards other objects.

In the material world, what is vastly great begets in us a pleasing admiration; what is beautiful, we look on with delight. The grand works of nature, or of art, or such, as discover exquisite contrivance

SERM. trivance and design, or are executed in

III. the finest and best manner, always give
us sensible pleasure, and cause certain agreeable emotions of mind. That kind of beauty which is seen in the various orders of the world of life, especially in our own species, and those works of human art which are an imitation of it, such as sculpture and painting, please still more, and more engage the attention of the admiring mind. We account that taste which giveth the greatest sensibility in these things a perfection in nature, and a very high one, and look upon insensibility to all such things as a reproachful defect. But we find this sensibility, and the emotions, which in pursuance of it are raised in the mind, with respect to moral characters, still greater. Let any man of discernment in moral objects, have a character of high distinction in purity, fortitude and resolution, in constancy and fidelity, set before him; let him see these virtues tried to the utmost, in the most painful trials, conquering and coming out like gold from the fire, and he cannot but admire, love and delight in them. Nay, and in attending

tending to some one very heroic action, **SERM.**
how will the soul be moved? How will **III.**
the very animal frame be affected? And
will not all acknowledge that these
strong and moving sensations, are most
natural and commendable? And the cha-
racter is accounted despicable, in which
no such thing is found. But to shew
how much and deeply the mind is af-
fected by those beauties and graces of
the moral kind, and with what a strong
inclination it uniteth itself to the objects
in which they are found, let the enter-
tainment and delight which spring from
the tenderesses of sacred intimate friend-
ship testify, and those workings in the
heart of love, esteem, and sympathy,
which are so sensible and affecting.
Surely, all these are most natural and be-
coming the heart of man. Now, from
this frame, and those affections planted
in us, we may judge how the heart may
be, how it ought to be touched in our
contemplation and converse with the
objects of religion, with the greatness
and excellency, the goodness and love
of the Supreme Being, appearing in all
his works; with the astonishing grace,
and

SERM. and condescension, the friendship and
 III. love of him who died for us; with the
 { vastness of those prospects which are
 opened to us by faith; and the amazing
 greatness of the world of spirits, and
 those numberless multitudes which con-
 stitute the family of God. Surely, to
 feel admiration, the highest reverence,
 the most ardent love and gratitude glow-
 ing in the heart, one would think should
 be the most natural of all things, when
 we seriously contemplate the parent of all.

Or, shall we, without wonder, behold
 infinite contrivance and wisdom? The
 vastness and inexpressible magnificence
 of the works of God, without any e-
 motion? Shall our thoughts be fixed upon
 spotless purity, upon unchangeable good-
 ness, upon a being whose very essence
 is love, whose beneficiaries we constantly
 and most eminently are, without love,
 without gratitude? Shall we behold in
 the cross of our Saviour unspeakable ex-
 cellency, conflicting with the greatest
 suffering and distress, bearing this with
 the greatest constancy and resignation,
 bearing it on our account, and for our
 sakes, without emotion? Shall not the
 wonders

wonders of grace make a deep impression upon our minds, that grace which so conspicuously appeared in the interposition of the Son of God, the most amazing event in the whole of the divine administration? Certainly, the most lively exercises of love and gratitude, and the greatest sensibility to these matchless objects of them, infinitely become us: And to be cold and unmoved by such things as these, speaketh a very undesirable state of the mind. Again, how glorious the prospects which are set before us? How high the dignity of those illustrious conquerors, to whom it is promised by our blessed Saviour, that they shall be set down with him upon his throne, as he also overcame, and is set down with the Father upon his throne? And how doth the assurance of an endless duration in such an honourable and happy state affect the mind? Is it to be wondered at, that the joy of a Christian in believing should rise into rapture, and that the greatest activity, and zeal, and delight in the service of God, should attend it, that the most lively vigour should animate all the powers,

SERM. powers, and that the joy of the Lord
 III. should give an invincible strength? In a
 word, in the greatness, excellency, and
 loveliness of those divine objects, the be-
 lieving and attentive find what above
 all things else raiseth admiration, love,
 gratitude, and all those affections, which
 are the most sensible and powerful, as
 well as the most delightful to the mind,
 But what I principally aim at, is, that
 those emotions of soul are most natural,
 and that if they are at all to be called
 enthusiastic, that enthusiasm is of a most
 excellent kind, greatly to be desired,
 carefully to be cultivated and encour-
 aged.

But you will easily see how this happy
 and most delightful state of the soul is
 to be distinguished from the wild en-
 thusiasm which was treated of in the
 first part of this discourse. The one is
 quite natural and rational, no more than
 the fruit of a proper improvement of
 our understanding, and exercise of our
 best affections. The other hath nothing
 to do with reason, and indeed is a kind
 of phrenzy. The one is tumultuous,
 attended with great agitations of mind,
 and even of body; the other is all com-
 posure,

posure and serenity, all uniform, and worthy of the very best and most perfect state of the mind; not weakening the rational powers, but giving them additional life and vigour. In the exercise of these holy and devout affections, arising from the discerned excellency of the object, the mind perceiveth itself right, and the very feeling of the soul justifies itself; but in the other, wild and unaccountable imaginations take place; and the most extravagant reveries pass upon men for divine infusions.

SERM.
III.

But how great is the mistake, if avoiding enthusiasm, we should go into coldness and lifeless indifferency in matters of religion; unconcerned to have those lively feelings of the powers of what the Apostle calleth the world to come, that is the kingdom of grace, and of glory, which so much become believers; unconcerned about the vigorous exercise of the best and worthiest affections, and whether we feel ourselves alive as Christians; engaging in religious services and solemnities without spirit, without delight to ourselves, and without advantage; and so

the

SERM. the great ends of all religion defeated

III. and lost? Surely, against this we ought
carefully to guard; against this, which
I am afraid is too common a distemper.
To distinguish the true power and life
of godliness from all irrational heats of
enthusiasm, I have made the foregoing
remarks, but to recommend life, and a
vigorous exercise of our powers in reli-
gious matters, was a principal part of
the design of this discourse. It ought
to be our endeavour to stir up our good
affections, to keep the mind constantly
under the power of them, to preserve
always the feelings, which are suitable
to those objects with which we are
daily conversing, and to consider luke-
warmness and insensibility as a great and
essential defect.

That the mind should be always in
possession of itself, that it should be se-
rene, and calm, and composed, is no doubt
right, and indeed, necessary; but all this
is perfectly consistent with the lively
exercise of the best affections, and with
the greatest elevation of sentiment, con-
sistent perfectly with our being filled
with all the fullness of God. If our

own

own hearts are not warmed by religious exercises, if the sacred fire, if I may speak so, be not kept alive in them, our religion will do us little good. We may maintain the form of it, but that is insignificant without the power; and with such a lifeless state, evil desires and bad practices will be found to be very consistent. But if our hearts are thoroughly affected, if the love of God and of Christ reign in them, if those truly great, and pure and joyful sentiments which christianity inspireth, possess our souls, then shall all impure lusts be banished, then shall we know the kingdom of heaven within us, and the joys of that internal paradise as a sure pledge of our being admitted in due time into the blessed paradise above. We shall have pleasure in our devotions, in our religious meditations, in our acts of charity; and shall find ourselves growing in grace and increasing in all goodness.

And what have we so much to mind? To what ought we to apply our powers with so great diligence? What will be fruitful

SERMON. fruitful to us of so great advantages?

III. What will yield us as solid and substantial joy? Let us then endeavour to raise the mind to, and keep it in such a frame, as will be thus serviceable to us, effectually delivering us from every hateful lust, and opening to us the springs of the purest delight.

SERMON IV.

The tendency of the Christian Religion to inspire the mind with strength and vigour in all seasons of difficulty and distress; to preserve it from what enfeebles its power; and to render it fit for all the services of life.

2 TIM. I. 7.

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

THE Apostle Paul, who was Timothy's Father in Christ, after having expressed his most affectionate remembrance of him, and full satisfaction in his sincerity as a Christian, exhorts him to vigour

SERM. your and diligence in acting the part
 IV. to which he was called, and to stir up
 the gift of God minister'd to him by
 this Apostle, that it might be useful to
 the best purposes; observing that such
 diligence became the Christian spirit,
 which has nothing in it of the slothful
 or indolent, of the mean or dastardly,
 but is the spirit of power, of love, and
 of a sound mind.

These characters I propose in some
 discourses to explain to you, and to
 give you a distinct view of the genius
 and spirit of Christianity.

I begin with the first, in order, in
 the text; *God has not given us the
 spirit of fear, but of power.* The dis-
 ciples, of Christ, in that age laboured un-
 der great hardships, had many irrecon-
 cileable enemies, and were daily exposed
 to grievous persecution. They were con-
 stantly in hazard of their lives. In such
 a state of things, men who were fearful
 and pusillanimous were ill qualified for
 the Christian profession, especially, for
 being employed in the propagation of
 that religion. But we find, that *God
 did not give his servants the spirit of
 fear;*

fear; but of power. He endowed them SERM.
with fortitude and resolution. And it IV.
seems evidently to speak a divine pre-
sence with them, and divine influence,
that such numbers in the first ages of
Christianity were prepared to act so bold
and undaunted a part, and to suffer to
the utmost with an unshaken steadiness
and constancy in defence of it. Not
here and there one, distinguished by he-
roic courage and greatness of mind, for
it was a common thing to suffer even to
martyrdom, with a spirit which was so far
from shrinking, that it shewed rather a
readiness for suffering; and this in tender
age, and in the tender sex, as well as in those
in whom a far greater measure of hardiness
and fortitude might be reasonably expected.

The spirit which rested upon the dis-
ciples of our Saviour, was indeed a spirit
of power, in a peculiar sense; that is, they
were thereby enabled to work many great
miracles, which evidently shewed that
the power of the highest was with them,
and greatly contributed to the conversion
of the world to the Christian faith. But
I do not imagine that those extraordi-
nary gifts are here meant: The author
seems

SER. M. seems rather to speak of the genius and
 IV. spirit of Christianity, and the temper of
 mind which it inspires, as set in oppo-
 sition to the spirit of fear, and in con-
 junction with that of love and of a
 sound mind. These are the endow-
 ments of Christians in all ages. And
 in proportion as they have the true
 Christian spirit, they will have power,
 as well as love, and a sound mind.

Now, to shew that the spirit of Chris-
 tianity is a spirit of power, in other
 words, to shew that the genius of this
 religion is such as tends to invigorate
 the mind, to make men firm, resolute,
 and fit for action; it may be observed,
 that this religion has an admirable ten-
 dency, and is most happily contrived for
 delivering men from all those things,
 which depress and enfeeble the mind,
 and enervate the active powers, such
 are principally, a sense and conscious-
 ness of great guilt, in intemperance, in
 sensual pleasures and gratifications, and
 a melancholy inclination and cast of
 temper.

First, a sense and consciousness of great
 guilt. *The wicked, says the wise man, flie when*

no man pursueth, but the righteous are bold **S E R M**
as a Lion. Prov. xxviii. 1. Where men **IV.**

are not hardened into an utter insensibility in all such matters, which we see is sometimes the case, there is nothing so confounding as a consciousness of great crimes. This fills the countenance with painful shame, and the heart with terror. And though in times of peace and safety, where men have no apprehensions of danger, such persons may put on airs, as if they were above all dread of any evil, or of any power to inflict punishment, yet place them in circumstances of hazard and alarm, and it is seen that their hearts sink within them; fearfulness and confusion surprize, and make them dejected, and often desperate. No wonder; for a conscience which has been often and grievously injured, when it awakes to vengeance, as an exasperated fury, who can bear it? Besides that great guilt is, in its own nature, the source of painful remorse, and great confusion and disquietude to the spirit, as well as of shame, and seeks to hide itself; besides this, I say, few are gone so far in infidelity as to have lost

G

all

SERM. all sense of God, as a moral Governour,

IV. who is displeased with sin; and who will make his displeasure very sensible to impenitent offenders in the dreadful effects of it. And when men begin to think that they are exposed to his just indignation, that omnipotence is armed against them, and that no one can say what punishment it may be fit for the supreme ruler to inflict, or of how long continuance it may be, to what sanctuary can they fly from these dreadful apprehensions? No wonder that terror should possess their souls, and quite bereave them of resolution and the use of their active powers. *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.* Heb. x. 31. This miserable state of vicious and corrupted hearts often discovers itself, in times of imminent danger, in most frightful and pitiable forms, the natural appearances of woe and despair; what cries and lamentations are heard, what looks of anguish are seen? From such a dismal state, Christianity is an effectual preservative. While men follow the dictates of it, they will do justice to their consciences, they

they will be preserved from presumptuous sin: They will enjoy the peace and tranquillity of soul, the open and unabashed countenance, the assured mind, the hope in God, which nothing but integrity can give. Free from confounding fear and alarm within them, they will have the full use of their rational active powers, and without being lost to themselves, may look danger, in its most threatening appearances, in the face. But if men have in time past been so unhappy as to be ensnared by vice, and guilty of presumptuous sin, yet if they are conscious to themselves of ingenuous repentance, and that the sincerity of it has been made evident by an actual reformation of life, in this consciousness, according to the express declarations of the gospel, they have an assured pledge of forgiveness, and that their Maker is reconciled to them. This delivers them from painful apprehensions and disquietude of spirit, and ministers peace which passeth all understanding. Now, that tranquillity of spirit which is the attendant of a consciousness of integrity, or a sense of pardon,

SERMON.
IV.

SERMON. is necessary as the foundation of bold-

IV. ness and resolution, it is necessary to the enjoyment of ourselves, and the exercise of our active powers in the best manner. Christianity gives us power as it gives us peace in our consciences and hope in God.

Another thing which greatly enfeebles the active powers is intemperance in sensual pleasures and gratifications. Men whose God is their belly, whose delight is in excess of wine, who give themselves to luxury and the impurities of the flesh, are ill prepared for any services in which a vigorous and hardy resolution, a patience of labour and fatigue, boldness and activity are required. Voluptuousness begets a vicious softness and delicacy which flies from all hardship and danger: It enervates the spirit and all the active powers, and makes men in a great degree incapable of any thing brave or heroic. What an easy prey did the *Asiatic* luxury make hundreds of thousands, which might be called a vast multitude, indeed, but not an army, to a few hardy *European* veterans inured to military discipline, to labour,

labour, and toil, and abstinence? And it SERM.
 is judiciously observed, by the writers of IV.
 that time, that the *Carthaginian* army
 suffered much more by the soft delights
 of *Capua*, than by all the horrors of the
Alpine mountains, and the want and fa-
 tigue sustained upon them. But do we
 not see a thousand instances of the same
 kind in private life. Luxury and licen-
 tious pleasure do not only spoil the taste
 for the noblest exercises and pursuits,
 but enervate the active powers, sink
 men into a most ignoble and dishonour-
 able indolence, and make every thing
 attended with much labour and difficulty
 too hard for them. And there is no-
 thing more common than to see, in all
 the pomp of luxury, a poor, slothful, and
 insignificant spirit. In truth the volup-
 tuous character cannot be set in a light
 too contemptible. Of all pursuits, that
 of pleasure, as the chief good, is the
 most to be despised. A sense of guilt
 in the pleasures which are sinful, and
 conscience not yet quite subdued, may
 perhaps give great disturbance to men
 in their vicious courses; something
 within them whispers that they are do-

SERM. ing wrong, and that the end of

IV. these things must be bitter as worm-wood, but all virtuous resolution, all the resisting power being lost, these men, as *Solomon* speaks, suffer themselves to be dragged by lust and appetite *as an Ox to the slaughter, and the fool to the correction of the stocks*. Perhaps affairs of importance to themselves or their friends demand their attention, and are of such a kind, that an opportunity lost, may not be easily, or ever recovered, whilst there is another demand to be first satisfied, to which the impotent mind tamely submits. The cause of our country, the cause of truth and virtue, may need a resolved and vigorous appearance in their behalf; but it is not to be expected; for the generous dispositions, the hardy valour of soul which are wanted upon such occasions, are lost in sloth and luxury, which yet must be indulged whatever be the consequence. Some instances of this kind we know there have been, which have rendered the characters forever infamous.

But

But what an effectual preservative SERM.
 from such a mean state, is the Christian IV.
 Spirit. The religion of Christ enjoins
 the strictest temperance; and forbids all
 excess in sensual pleasure and gratifica-
 tion. And the Apostle *Paul* has given
 us a noble and most significant il-
 lustration of this in his own case,
1 Cor. ix. 26. When he had recom-
 mended to them a virtuous self govern-
 ment, and set before them the resolved
 abstinence and temperance of those, who
 strove for the prize in the public games,
 as an example; observing, that if they
 submitted to this for a corruptible crown,
 much more ought the disciples of Christ
 to submit to it, that they might gain
 a crown which is incorruptible; he sets
 before them likewise his own conduct,
*I keep under my body, and bring it into
 subjection; lest that by any means, when I
 have preached to others, I myself should be
 a cast away.* I am sensible, as if he had
 said, of great danger from enflamed de-
 sires and appetites. I set myself to bear
 them down with most obstinate resolu-
 tion. The word in the original is very
 significant, expressing his readiness to use

SERM. any severity of discipline, which was necessary to answer this great end; and
IV. that his body, and the appetites of it, should be always by him held in the place of a slave. And indeed, this is essential to a truly virtuous character. It is true, indeed, that many persons from a superstitious zeal, and as if such things were a pleasing sacrifice to God, have affected not only great austerity of life, but many very painful mortifications, and some of them so much out of nature, that one would wonder how they should enter into their imaginations; in the early ages of Christianity the passion for a monastic life ran so high, and even for the severities of it, that the religion of Christ, to men who did not understand it, but took their ideas of it from such persons, must appear extremely ridiculous. But, after all, it is certain, that a hardy temperance is essential to a virtuous character, and no man will ever be able to approve himself as a man of worth, who cannot restrain the natural appetites, and keep them in subjection to reason and conscience. It was one great design of the

the philosophy of the antient moralists SERM.
to effect this by its precepts and disci- IV.
pline. They thought that all virtue was

comprehended under two heads, namely, patience and abstinence; bearing evil and calamity in a proper manner, and abstaining from irregular pleasures and gratifications. It is hard to say which of these is of the greatest importance; but it is evident they are both necessary. However, what I am to observe is principally this, that the religion of Christ, by forbidding all excess in sensual pleasure, and enjoining the strictest temperance, tends most happily to preserve the vigour of the soul, and all the active powers, in a state fit for the services of human life. And the truth is, where the spirit of Christianity prevails, there will be such a taste for the refined pleasures of virtue, as will thoroughly engage the spirit, and make men in a great measure indifferent to sensual delights. *The joy of the Holy Ghost* is infinitely more satisfying than these, and when mens hearts are full of heavenly desire, and full of God, the animal appetites will have little power over them.

The

SERM. The last thing I mentioned, as what

IV. enfeebles the mind and enervates the active powers, is a melancholy inclination and cast of temper. How woeful the effects of this we see in many instances. A horrid gloom overspreads the mind. Every thing is seen in a dark and disagreeable light. All the real evils of life, and disadvantages of our present state are aggravated, and many grievances added to them, which have no existence but in a melancholy imagination. Men under the power of this disorder, become apprehensive and fearful, dissatisfied and uneasy in every circumstance. Imagination itself could not contrive a state which would make them happy. Inward discontent sours all the enjoyments of life, and nothing pleases. There is neither heart nor hand for the services of life. And men may be said rather to bear existence about them as a burthen, than to enjoy it; and are very unfit for the offices of it. Indeed the wretchedness of this state is sometimes such as to be beyond all description; and we see, it, not unfrequently, begets such an impatience of life, that men

men do violence to it, and, by an un-SERM.
natural crime, put an end to it. IV.

It is very certain, that this disorder does sometimes so far prevail, that no reasoning from the clearest and most evident principles is of any service. The rational powers, as well as the active, seem to be quite benumbed; and while the mind is rack'd with pain, yet it discovers a disrelish of any objects but what give pain, and a kind of reluctance against all diversion from the melancholy gloom. But certainly so far as principles of reason and just sentiments can prevail to give relief, the religion of Christ is contrived to do it. To the believing and self approved mind it sets every thing in the most desirable light. It alleviates the grievances and sorrows of life, making men capable of considering them as real advantages, by becoming the means of attaining to superior degrees of happiness. It presents the Supreme Being to the mind, as with irresistible sway, governing all things in the best manner, and most to the gain of his faithful servants. It shews a speedy end of evil and suffering, which is to be

SERM. be succeeded by eternal life. These

IV. principles, if any principles can effect it, will make the mind chearful and easy. And when by a divine illumination, men are prepared for right judgment, and can discern and feel according to truth, they will find the spirit raised above all distress, and painful apprehension; and living by faith, will enjoy life with satisfaction; so that they will have possession of themselves, and be capable of applying the active powers with chearfulness, to the true purposes of life and religion.

This leads me to the next thing I would insist upon for the illustration of this argument, viz. That as the genius and spirit of true Christianity is a most effectual preservative from all things that enfeeble the mind, and debilitate the active powers, so it has an admirable tendency to minister strength and vigour to the soul, and prepares men for acting the part assigned to them with advantage and success.

For in the first place, it presents to the thoughts such a view of human life, as pleases and is most encouraging to the

the reflecting mind, and fills it with SERM. sentiments which are large and generous. **IV.**

With respect to life itself, it sets it in a pleasing light, as only the infancy of existence, and an introduction to a nobler state, the duration of which is to have no period : And forbids us to form our judgment of existence only from our present circumstances, directing our thoughts to eternity, in which our state may be greatly advanced not only by our present labours, but even by those sufferings of life which are to flesh and blood so grievous. In this view, human life must be considered as an invaluable blessing ; and once a man can steadfastly judge it so, he will be prepared with vigour and delight to perform the offices of it. Christianity also fills the mind with most generous sentiments of the relation in which we stand to God and the Redeemer, and the vast intellectual family. In this relation there is a pleasing dignity. Is it not honourable to be acknowledged as the *offspring of God ; as heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ ?* To be members of that glorious family in which God the great Father will
for

SERM. for ever dwell, distributing the rich gifts

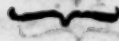
IV. of his grace to the individuals according to their capacities, and rejoicing in their happiness. Have not all the members of it in common such honourable and valuable priviledges, that in comparifon, the little diftinctions among them which are of a temporal kind, fink to nothing in the imagination, and appear fcarce worthy of notice? In a word, a fincere difciple of Chrift muft find the greateft reason to be pleafed with his Creator, and to exult in exiftence; and when the mind is in fuch a ftate, it muft be all life and vigour in the fervices to which we are called. We read in fcripture *that the joy of the Lord is the ftrength of his fervants.* Neh. viii. 10. And it is a very juft way of fpeaking; for, as nothing can more proftate the active powers than deep forrow and grief, fo nothing gives more life and energy than gladnefs of heart. And the Apoftle *Paul* fpeaks in a way very fuitable to, and worthy of the genius of Chriftianity, when he exhorts us *to rejoice evermore.* We can indeed wifh for nothing more to make our ftate joyful,

ful, and our hearts glad, than what the SERM. Christian scheme presents to a believing mind; so that the spirit of Christianity may be justly termed the spirit of power. IV.

Secondly, The religion of Christ will never engage us in any cause, or service, or course of action, but what is worthy of us, and in which it is fit for us to exert our powers. What we do in obedience to Christ our leader, if we have a right understanding of his precepts, reason and conscience will approve. We shall have no inward checks, none of the confusion of an accusing or self-condemning heart, nor any of the distracting fears and uneasinesses which this brings forth. On the contrary, we shall find ourselves engaged, not only in a course of actions which are free from blame, but which are worthy and important; and in a cause the most honourable and excellent of all others, the cause of truth and virtue, the only cause of God. And the scriptures do the greatest honour to the servants of Christ, while it represents them as *workers together with him*, and even, *with God*. Now,

is

SERM. is it not natural, that a generous mind

IV.  should be inflamed with zeal when acting in a cause the most worthy and honourable? and be prepared to exert all its powers and vigour? not declining any labour, or shrinking from any hardship or suffering, which men may be called to in defence of it? Will not a cause most important and honourable give spirit and fire, if you will pardon the expression, to the patrons and defenders of it? What great things have brave men done in defence of their country? In some instances, even exceeding what could well be expected from human nature, exceeding themselves. But surely the love of God, and of mankind, and of truth and virtue, are principles still more generous and noble, than the love of our country; and is it not to be expected then, that in acting upon these, men should act with the greatest spirit and vigour? Does not experience justify these expectations, in the illustrious train of confessors, and martyrs, which are found in the records of the Christian Church? Men who triumphed over their enemies, by their patience under

under all possible cruelty; and made it SERM.
evident that they might be slaughtered, IV.
but could not be conquered. Such the

magnanimity and courage which the cause of Christianity, so honourable and so important, inspires! And how well does it become the followers of Jesus to imitate the glorious pattern he set them, in his own conduct, who endured the cross and despised the shame, who with perfect meekness and resignation of spirit submitted to all which the power and malice of his enemies could lay upon him, and thus has shewed us how to overcome the world?

Thirdly, it greatly animates the spirit of a Christian to know, that, in doing his duty, he has God upon his side. To have his approbation is a most desirable thing, and the highest honour. This will effectually support men in well-doing, against all the reproaches and injurious censures of the unthinking or prejudiced. But it is not only the approbation of their principles and conduct which Christians are to expect. For we know that the Creator acts the part of a moral governour. And that as

H

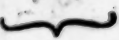
those

SERM. those who do good, are pleasing to him,

IV. so he will certainly espouse their cause.

He will undoubtedly right their wrongs, and reward them, good for the evil they may have endured in the cause of truth and virtue. He will record all the services they have done with sincerity, all their good actions; not one of them, the most insignificant to appearance, shall be forgotten; for if any man gives to a disciple of Christ a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, he shall in no wise lose his reward. The faith of this, and a fixed persuasion that God as our moral governour is ever present with us, observes our conduct, will be pleased with our good actions, and reward them in a way worthy of his bounty and goodness, gives great spirit and life in doing the will of God, even in circumstances of the greatest difficulty, and hardship. When men turn their thoughts to the present Divinity, all these things in a great measure vanish, and it is indeed shameful to complain of them.

Especially, when it is considered, that from divine power we confidently expect

expect all necessary assistance to the SERM. performance of our duty, and acting **IV.** our part well in every circumstance. 

God' has never forsaken them *who put their trust in him.* He can and he will strengthen his servants, by *his holy spirit, with might in the inner man.* He will make them conquerors and more than conquerors. His grace shall be sufficient for them, and his strength will be made perfect in weakness.

And the Apostle Paul expresses himself in a manner very honourable to his great Master, and worthy of himself, Phil. iv, 13. *I can do all things through Christ strengthening me.*

No man has any reason from nature and sound philosophy, to imagine that God will not give real assistance to those, who in circumstances of difficulty and distress seek him ; assistance so effectual, as to be worthy of such strong representations. And men who have best known religion have been most sensible of it. That he will be present with the good and help them, is an article of natural religion, as well as of Christianity ; and surely a man will be prepared to engage in any service, even the most difficult,

SERM. difficult, with resolution and spirit, when

IV. he knows that there is a power on his side for which nothing is too hard. And the powers of nature will be exerted in the best manner, when men believe that the God of nature is with them.

This assures the mind of happy success. Which is the last thing I shall mention for illustration of this argument.

Despair of success in any adventure, chills all the active powers, and makes men feeble, so that they become incapable of doing, even what otherwise they might do with ease. If in that hopeless state of the mind they are forced upon action, it is without life and vigour, and with a certain unconcern and negligence, which do not a little contribute to that want of success, the prospect of which is the cause of despondency. It is true, indeed, in some particular cases, despair has been said to give men courage, as in the field of battle, where it is very natural that if men see no hope of escaping with life, they should make the purchase of victory as dear to the enemy as they can.

Tho'

Tho' it hath been often observed, by SERM.
the wisest men, that this resolution, which IV.
arises from despair, is no way equal to
that, which assurance of success and confidence of victory give men. But then how many are the cases of difficulty and danger, in which this kind of desperate courage has no room for exercise; and where men can have no such consideration as the selling of their lives at the dearest rate, to give them spirit? How listless, then, and as to action, how indifferent must they be; not caring whether they do or not do, or what they do! Very different, surely, is this state of the mind, from that in which we have good assurance of success in our endeavours; and that if we are diligent in doing what is certainly in our power to do, the issue shall be perfectly to our satisfaction. This gives great life in action, and makes it pleasure to exert our power to the utmost. Thus assurance of success does indeed prove a most powerful means of gaining it.

Christianity ensures success to all its true votaries with respect to the great ends of human life. In many particular de-

SERM. signs and attempts they may meet with
IV. disappointment in their hopes and expectations, but with respect to the great thing which they pursue, they are perfectly safe. They are contributing what they can, *as workers together with God*, in carrying his great designs into execution. And they know his designs will be carried into execution, tho' in many things, which short-sighted mortals look upon as promising steps, the success should not be answerable. The grand design cannot fail. Nor can the great thing, which every individual has to pursue for himself, that is, his own salvation, fail of accomplishment, if pursued with sincerity and persevering diligence. So that the utmost provision is made in the gospel for assuring our hopes, and giving us joyful vigour in acting our part.

If we lay these things together, it will fully appear, that the spirit of Christianity is a spirit of power. For it is an effectual preservative from those things which enfeeble the mind, and enervate its faculties, such, principally, as consciousness of great guilt, luxury, and a voluptuous

voluptuous course of life, melancholy, SERM.
discontent, and fearful apprehension. And IV.
on the other hand, it ministers life and
vigour to the soul, as it makes men
pleased with existence and their station
in it, as it puts us upon no designs or
attempts but what are worthy of us,
and honourable to us, as it animates
us with the faith of a present Divinity
upon our side, who is our omnipotent
helper, and, finally, as it assures our
hearts of success with respect to the great
ends of life.

But the power and influences of the
Christian spirit are far better known by
being felt than described. When it has
overcome the spirit of the world in men,
when it has subdued impetuous passions,
when it has born them up under
great difficulties, and given them peace
and tranquillity in the face of danger,
when it has diffused a serene joy through
the soul in days of darkness and distress,
and preserved delight in God and his
administration, and delight in existence,
even in the most disastrous occurrences,
then it will appear what it really is,
and how glorious the power of it.

SERM. And that it has produced such effects

IV. as these, many have known from their own experience. And if we cultivate that spirit as we ought to do, we may still expect such effects. Indeed, if Christianity be no more to us than a matter of pleasing speculation, we shall know nothing of them; but if *this wisdom which is from above* enters into the heart, and we come to embrace the principles of it so as to act upon them, or, in the words of the Prophet, *if we follow on to know the Lord*, we shall know that *his out-goings are prepared as the morning*; we shall feel the energy of that spirit which is the spirit of light and life, and which has such power, that men have done, and still will do under the influences of it, for the sake of God and of truth, and virtue, what no other principle would have animated them to do.

Of such a spirit Christians still have need. The scriptural representations of the present state, justified by experience, fully shew this. The resisting of the various temptations to sin to which we are exposed, the bearing down boisterous and unruly passions, getting the better

better of bad habits which may have **SERM.**
been contracted, the bearing of evil, in **IV.**
an unspeakable variety of forms, which
may be appointed in our lot, and from
which no man can expect to be quite
free, are things, which, it must be con-
fessed, have difficulty in them, and re-
quire patience of labour, resolution, and
firmness of spirit. And though in the
peaceful days in which our lot has fal-
len, we do not suffer by the cruelty of
persecuting hands, yet we have enough
to try the strength of our spirits. Let
us endeavour therefore to make the best
improvement of Christianity to the pur-
pose of strengthening and confirming our-
selves. Let us lay aside sloth that we
may follow those who have gone before
us. Let us arm ourselves with *the same*
mind which was in them, *and let pa-*
tience have its perfect work in us, that we
may be perfect and intire wanting nothing.

SERMON V.

The tendency of Christianity to suppress and root out all those dispositions which contract the spirit, and cramp the good affections; to excite and strengthen love to one another, and to engage to all the offices of benevolence,

2 TIM. I. 7.

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

THE tendency of the Christian spirit to the exercise and strengthening of good and kind affection, is the subject which now lies before us.

Every man, who attends to the workings of his own heart, must be sensible that

that there are two grand principles, to SERM,
which all other instincts and affections V.
are to be submitted, namely, self love
and benevolence. No man will doubt
that self love is a most powerful, as it
is certainly a natural principle of action.
But we are directed in the holy scrip-
tures *to love our neighbours as ourselves;*
and this is likewise the law of our na-
ture. The meaning of which is, that
as we are naturally disposed and de-
termined to the love of ourselves, to de-
sire and pursue what may make us
happy, as an ultimate end, in which the
private affection rests; so we are to love
our neighbour, to bear a real disinte-
rested affection and good will to him;
and when it is in our power, to do
him good and contribute to his hap-
piness, as the ultimate end and pro-
per object of the benevolent affec-
tion, in which it rests. To contend
that there is no such disinterested good-
will in nature, is indeed casting a most
infamous reproach upon it; and there
is no ingenuous and worthy mind, but
must be sensible that it is utterly false;
and in reality good-will is not only a
principle in our nature, but it is, in its
best

SERM. best state, the strongest of all principles.

V. Men cannot be justified of their own hearts, and approved by their reflecting thoughts, if they do not, when called to it, give up all private interest to the public good. And as there are many instances in which this has been done, so we cannot but greatly admire the characters distinguished by such generosity, and public spirit, and heartily approve their conduct.

It was not, it could not be the design of the religion of Christ, to give us any principles or affections, which were not originally planted by the Creator in human nature. For to do this would not be to perfect our nature, but indeed, strictly speaking, to make a new one. The design of that religion is to recover men from the power and influence of bad principle, from depravity and corruption; and to make nature that excellent thing it was originally intended to be. And as love and good-will are confessedly the most excellent affections, so Christianity is in a peculiar manner adapted to strengthen them: The disciples of Christ have received the spirit of Love.

Whatever

Whatever we see amiable in any cha-
racter, is the object of love; and the
good-will, which necessarily attends it,
disposes the mind to all the good offices
we are capable of performing. There
is one character to which we owe the
greatest love and highest veneration, as
being the most excellent and amiable;
who is quite above need, or possibility
of receiving advantage by any kind of-
fices of ours. *He is not worshipped by the
hands of men as though he needed any thing,
seeing he giveth to all, life, and breath,
and all things; Acts xvii. 25.* As the
original cause of all, himself absolutely
independent, he communicates to all,
he receiveth from none. No man who
has got the idea of such a being into
his mind, but must confess that God
is to be loved above all, as having in
him every thing excellent and lovely;
and this sacred passion, if it be fit to
call it a passion, is properly expressed
in delightful contemplations of his high
perfections, and joy in his complete bles-
sedness; in a constant disposition to please
him, by doing his will; and in a hearty
and zealous concurrence with his glo-
rious

SERM.
V.

SERIOUS designs, so far as we are capable of

V. being the instruments of carrying them into execution, attended with an abhorrence and studious avoiding of every thing that may be displeasing to him. Thus to love the Lord our God with all our hearts, soul, and strength, is the first and great commandment.

But our fellow creatures are the objects of our love in another sense; they are the objects of our beneficence. We are placed in circumstances in which we may contribute greatly to their happiness by our good offices, and these, where we have any opportunity of performing them, are the only substantial evidence of the sincerity of our love. Nothing certainly can be more absurd than the profession of love to our neighbour, when yet we will do him no good, though it is in the power of our hand.

Love, in my text, may be taken in the largest sense, as comprehending both the love of God and our neighbour. These are indeed inseparably connected. The love of God must be attended with a spirit of love to our neighbours; and whosoever saith that he loveth God and
hateth

hateth his brother, is a liar ; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? 1 John iv. 20. But if we love one another, we are born of God, and know him, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

SERM.
V.

It is plain that the religion of Christ above all things, tends to beget and increase the love of God in us ; as it sets the divine perfections and counsels in the most amiable light, and contains expressions of his goodness to mankind, most astonishing, and far beyond any thing else we see in the works of his hands ; in *this was love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his son to be a propitiation for our sins. 1 John iv. 10. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life. John iii. 16.*

But as love, when spoken of in general, does usually in the holy scriptures signify charity to our fellow creatures, which is the end of the commandment, so I shall in this discourse principally treat of that, and shew that the genius
-of

SERM. of Christianity is indeed a spirit of love.

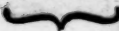
V. And I shall pursue the same method observed in my last discourse, namely, I shall first shew that Christianity tends to suppress all those irregular and bad dispositions which contract the spirit and cramp the good affections; secondly, that it tends greatly to strengthen these, and to encourage the exercise of them.

First, it tends to suppress all those irregular and bad dispositions which contract the spirit, and cramp the good affections; and these may be summed up under two heads, viz. the selfish spirit of this world, and a peevish dissatisfaction of mind with our state.

The first of these, namely, the selfish spirit of this world, stands in direct opposition to charity; as the one prevails, the other must give way. He that thinks and acts as if he were made only for himself; as if he were alone in the midst of the earth; as if he were to take care of nothing but his own interest, and regard his neighbours no otherwise than as they may be the means of promoting it; who thus acts as if he had no principle but self-love in him, and therefore

as to his moral frame is really monstrous, SERM.
(to which unhappy state of mind some V.
men by a long indulgence of the selfish
affections seem to have brought them-
selves) such an one, I say, must be an
utter stranger, as to true charity, so to
the Christian spirit. And this infamous
selfishness is the original rise of other
dispositions, which all men will acknow-
ledge to be hateful and abominable; par-
ticularly, of envy at the prosperity of
our neighbour; of a fixed malice and
implacable resentment against those who
have injured us, or are supposed to have
done so; which are dispositions perfectly
diabolical, and where they are suffered
to prevail, prevail upon the ruins of all
good affection. The man who can in-
dulge malice, revenge, and envy, and
take pleasure in them, is utterly unfit
for the offices of Charity, for he has
nothing of the spirit of it.

But what is it which this selfish spi-
rit, or spirit of the world, contends so
eagerly for? Not the noblest and most
valuable attainments; not moral perfec-
tion; the favour of God, or immortality;
no. The object of it is always some-
thing

SERM. thing of a temporal or worldly nature ;
V.  some distinctions, which makes a great figure on this scene, but which sound wisdom looks upon as insignificant ; something to which the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, or the pride of life points to. These are the things it pursues, these the things it would engross.

Now, Christianity strikes at the very root of this temper. The disciples of Christ are not of this world, even as their Saviour was not of it. It is an express preliminary in his covenant, that they should be ready, at his call, to give up all their temporal interests ; content with the prospect of a glorious reward hereafter, of *an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and which fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.* 1 Peter i. 3. Of this inheritance we have the highest notions given us in the holy scriptures ; and from what we know of the nature of things, we have reason to believe they are just. For a state of perfect innocence, of the uninterrupted exercise of the good affections, of perfect tranquillity

lity of spirit, the fullest fruition of the highest social delight, above all, the most satisfying enjoyment of God, is surely the noblest state which can enter into the imagination. But then this is of a nature quite different from sensual and temporal enjoyments ; and it requires a quite different temper and taste to make men capable of choosing and pursuing it, or of being happy in it. A taste directly the reverse of the carnal and worldly spirit. For where this taste once obtains, and men have learned to walk by faith and not by sight, there must be an indifference to the things of this world ; so far, I mean, an indifference, that they shall appear as nothing when compared to the hopes of a christian. When the mind is raised above those things which are the mammon, the deity of a selfish spirit, that spirit loses all its strength, and gives way to the worthy and generous dispositions. Pity, indeed it is, great pity, that so many who profess the religion of Christ, and cannot in the judgment of Charity be pronounced unsincere, should be so much, as they evidently are, under the power of carnal affections, and

SERM. therefore of the selfish spirit. But then

V. this shews that they are far from being perfect Christians; and that they have still a greater mixture of the genius of this world; whereas it does not at all shew, that the principles and spirit of Christianity have not a tendency to suppress that, which, it evidently appears, they have. However, it will always be found to be fact, that when men have placed *their affections on things which are above, and not on the things of this world*, the selfish spirit, which contends principally, or only for the things of this world, will lose it's main strength.

The light, again, in which Christianity places men, as constantly under the immediate inspection and tuition of the supreme Arbiter of all; as related to a great family, and parts of a great whole, which is, and ever will be under his care; and who will share in the greatest good provided for that family, so far as the capacity of the individual and the general good of the whole admit; these principles, I say, which though nature indeed teaches, yet are more clearly and fully

fully set before us in the religion of SERM. Christ, all tend to the suppression of V. the selfish spirit. But you will easily enlarge upon these hints in your own thoughts.

The other great enemy to charity and the good affections, is, a peevish dissatisfaction with our state. Let men, for the illustration of this, look into their own hearts. They will certainly find, that when things go prosperously with them, when they are pleased with their state, and their hearts are glad, then their minds are the most open to the applications, and their hands to the exigencies of their neighbours. Good humour is a wonderful preparation for the exercise of the good affections, and for the doing of kind offices. And for this reason, it is no small art in such as are in a dependent state, and who have favours to ask, to find out those seasons for addressing their superiors when their minds are in the greatest tranquillity, when they are in what is called a good humour or temper. Whereas, when the mind is in an opposite state, when a peevish fullness or dissatisfaction and

SERM. discontent prevail, there is little good to
 V. be expected. These shut up the heart ;
 and men poring on their own unhappi-
 ness, have no disposition to listen to the
 complaints of others, or to labour for
 their relief. Where this temper is ha-
 bitual, it really eats like a canker. To
 be almost constantly out of humour,
 which is the state of some unhappy
 mortals, destroys every thing excellent,
 and more particularly the generous and
 good affections, which can never thrive
 in such a soil, for they require an easy
 and frank, an open and ingenuous spirit.
 He that is pleased with himself and his
 state, pleased with his maker and the
 administration of all things around him,
 who rejoices in tranquillity and satis-
 faction of spirit ; he it is, who will have
 the kind heart, and the open hand.
 He has room in his mind, and attention
 for the interests of others ; and is pre-
 pared to sympathize in their sorrows,
 and to share their joys. Now,

How admirably is the religion of Christ
 calculated for begetting this joyful calm
 and tranquillity of spirit, that stable sa-
 tisfaction with the state in which we
 are

are placed? It presents to us the most surprizing and satisfying expressions of the love of him who made, and who redeemed us; it shews us that the presence of the universal Sovereign is ever with us; that the whole world, and every individual is under his notice; that we want no more to ensure the greatest happiness to us, but that we be the objects of his favour; that sincere repentance of our past sins, and a studious endeavour to do his will, and to please him for the future, will certainly make us so; that in this case, every circumstance, every event in our present state, shall contribute to our advantage; and that the present scene shall issue in a happy immortality. Surely, if these principles are received with a steady assent, as what may be depended on, they will make the mind easy and the heart glad. All sourness of temper, all fullen dissatisfaction will flee before them. Especially when the mind (under the light of God's countenance, and the influence of that good spirit who is the comforter of Christians, and by whom joy is diffused into

S E R M.
V.

I 4

their

SERMON. their Souls) feels all the power of these
 V. sacred principles, in other words, when
 the God of hope fills men with all joy
 and peace in believing, then all gloom
 will be dispelled; the mind will taste a per-
 fect satisfaction; and then the good affec-
 tions will be exerted in the best manner.

This leads to the second head, namely,
 that Christianity greatly encourages all
 the good affections, and tends to strength-
 en and confirm them. It is not indeed
 a small matter, that the Christian spirit
 so effectually bears down the worldly
 and selfish, which standeth in opposi-
 tion to charity: for when this bad spirit
 is cast out, and has no more power over
 the soul, then the genuine affections of
 nature will have opportunity of exert-
 ing themselves, and will put men upon
 all good offices to one another. It has
 been already observed, that the benevo-
 lent and kind affections are far from
 being weak in our original constitution,
 they are in truth designed to be the
 strongest; and when every thing which
 perverted that constitution, and hurts
 the original frame, is removed, then na-
 ture will appear like itself, the very image
 of God in love and goodness.

But

But the striking so directly at the SERM.
worldly selfish spirit, and setting nature V.
free from the entanglements of bondage
to it, is not all; the religion of Christ
has also provided greatly for the en-
couragement of good and worthy dis-
positions, and for strengthening charity
in us.

Charity is the great thing recom-
mended by our Saviour, and bound upon
us by the laws of the gospel. It ap-
pears in the new testament, in reality
to be what the Apostle *Paul* has called
it, *the end of the commandment*. We are
assured by that same author, that if we
have not charity, whatever else we have
to boast of in the way of attainments
by our own diligence and improvements,
or by miraculous gifts conferred upon us,
*so that we could speak in every tongue, had
all knowledge and understood all mysteries,
had all faith, so that we could remove
mountains; yet still we are nothing;*
that is, we are nothing to the true pur-
poses of Christianity and salvation. Our
Saviour has insisted upon nothing so
much as Charity; which he carries to
the highest perfection, teaching us not
only

SERM. only to love our friends, but even our

V.

enemies, and to return them good offices for their injuries and wrongs, that *so we may be perfect, and like our heavenly Father, who causes his sun to shine on the righteous and the wicked, and sends rain on the just and unjust.* He insists upon charity as the distinguishing character of his disciples, and as their glory. With recommending this to them he sets out; and at the last, when he was about to leave them, very much insists upon it; impressing it upon their minds by a very significant representation of his own spirit, in washing their feet, a thing they could never forget, and which shewed the tenderness and readiness to do all kind offices, which they ought to express to one another. And indeed, if any man is a stranger to the spirit of Christ, a stranger to charity, he is none of his. Every man then, who is desirous to satisfy the obligations he is under as a disciple of Christ, must with the most studious care suppress all envy, hatred, and malice, and cultivate love and good affections; love, not confined to any relation, any sect, party,

or

or denomination, but to all men. This S E R M.
is an effectual method of assuring our V.
hearts before God, and the sure way of
pleasing him.

Further, in the Gospel we have the fairest and most lovely patterns of Goodness set before us. The Apostle *Paul* teaches us to be *followers of God as dear children, and to walk in love.* Eph. v. 1. Intimating that in this the imitation and likeness of God consists. That we are made capable of an imitation of God, is a thought that wonderfully strikes the mind, and tends to give the utmost vigour to our desires of excelling in that, in which we become like him; which must undoubtedly be the most excellent of all things. Poor indeed are our highest attainments in this respect, and unworthy of being named when compared to divine perfection: but yet, as we have a clear perception of what it is to be benevolent and good, and indeed have the clearest idea of benevolence in God, that we have of any of his perfections, so in the exercise of goodness, we do really resemble him. And to be like him must ever be accounted our highest glory.

SERM. glory. We see the goodness of God in the works of nature, and common providence; we see it in our own frame, and in all things around us. But there is something in the gospel, which sets it in a light the most affecting which can be imagined. His grace and mercy to mankind are seen in the gift of his only begotten son for our salvation; *He so loved the world, that he spared not that divine person, but gave him up to the death for us all.* How much must the Father be supposed to love him! Yet he gave that command, in submission to which the Son of his love humbled himself into the form and fashion of a man, and became obedient to death, even the death of the Cross. If we really believe the scriptural representations of this matter, nothing can possibly have an equal effect upon the human heart: And it is in vain to attempt to illustrate it; for the thing does so strike the imagination at once, that illustrations do but weaken it. But while we turn our thoughts to it with seriousness and attention, must it not have a wondrous effect in enlarging the heart, and

and in giving a force and spring to the **SERM.**
good affections? The Apostle *Paul* speaks **V.**

with great propriety and justness upon
this subject. 2 Cor. iii. 18. *But we all
with open face, beholding as in a glass
the glory of the Lord, are changed into
the same image, from glory to glory as
by the spirit of the Lord.* We see the
glory of God in the clearest mirror, name-
ly, the glory of his goodness and love,
in the gospel scheme; and this view has
a transforming power; it changes men
into the image and likeness of God; it
makes them good. Such an example of
love and good will, does in it's own
nature tend greatly to please and open
the heart of him who seriously attends
to it; but when men consider them-
selves as the objects of such grace, and
made happy by it, it would be mon-
strous not to be moved, and engaged to
imitation. No consideration can be more
natural than this, I am infinitely in-
debted to the goodness of God to me,
and therefore it beomes me to be good
to others, and to cultivate and encou-
rage that affection to which I owe so
much.

The

SERM. The grace which appears in the gospel
 V. is still more insinuating, and touches the
 tender passions, when we consider the
 sufferings and death of our Saviour.
 The greatest worth in the deepest distress, bearing it with all meekness and piety, merely to serve the purposes of goodness, the very noblest purposes of it, is a scene which cannot but most powerfully engage; begetting the utmost esteem, and gratitude and love, and preparing the mind for imitation. Who that believes and considers what Christ has done to serve the designs of goodness, but will be determined to do whatsoever is in his power in concurrence with it? Who that contemplates his cross with serious attention, but must love him, and like him be prepared to love the brethren? the Apostle *John* teaches, that if *Christ laid down his life for us*, we ought also, when we have a proper call to it, *to lay down our lives for the brethren.* 1 John iii. 16. And the Apostle *Paul* speaks of constraints in the love of Christ; *the Love of Christ constraineth us.* This he felt himself as much as any man, and was as much under the power
 of

of ingenuous affection. *What mean you* SERM.
to weep and to break my heart, for I am V.
ready not to be bound only but also to die at }
Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.

Acts xxi. 13. And as he was zealous for the honour of his great leader, so he every where expresses the tenderest affection to his fellow Christians, and the most sollicitous care to do good to mankind. Stopping at no labour, daunted at no sufferings, in his endeavours to convert and save them. *He was made all things to all men, that he might by all means save some.* 1 Cor. ix. 22.

Upon the whole, nothing can be more incongruous than to profess the Christian faith, love to God, and love to the Redeemer, and yet to be without charity, *which is the end of the commandment*, the end of the Christian religion ; and which a true sense of the love of God, and of Christ must necessarily produce. Without doubt the spirit of Christ is a spirit of love, and where *the love of God is shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost*, there will be charity : *For as he that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love*, 1 John iv. 8 ; *so he that dwelleth*
in

SERM. *in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.*

V. *iv. 16.* This is the sum of all moral excellency; this is the respect in which we are partakers of a divine nature, and in which we have fellowship with the Father and the Son. And all pretensions to the spirit of Christ, to the inhabitation of God and of the Holy Ghost, and to divine influence upon the spirit; all pretensions to the new creature, and to be born from above, without charity and good affection, are vain and enthusiastical. For if the spirit of God dwells in us it will make us like God; if we are the offspring of God we must have his nature in us, which is love.

Lastly, for encouraging the good affections in us, the gospel has assured us, that we shall not be final losers by any thing we do, however expensive to our present interest, from a principle of true goodness and charity; on the contrary, that our reward shall be great, and we shall be called the Children of the highest, and be provided for, as such. Thus all the considerations, which a regard to self might present to us, in opposition

to

to charity and the tendencies of goodness in the heart, are quite over ballanced; and all suggestions of that kind silenced; so that really it is for our interest to cultivate love and good dispositions; to strengthen them as much as we can; and by repeated acts and daily exercise to contract those habits which become the disciples of Christ, and the children of God.

I have hastened through these particulars, for there is indeed no laboured illustration necessary to shew that the spirit of christianity is a spirit of love. Nor was any one ever so absurd as to question it. So far as theory goes, all are agreed; all parties and denominations of christians. Even those who most barbarously persecute their fellow christians, and are so far lost to humanity as to put them to the most cruel tortures, as well as death, pretend that charity is the principle of all; they do these cruel things from love to the souls of the sufferers. And it must be a very specious pretence, which can be made use of to colour such horrid barbarities.

K

No

SERM. No one but will acknowledge that
 V. charity is a fine, indeed, the most excellent thing. But, my Brethren, the sincere uniform practice of it is another matter: And it highly concerns us to look into our own hearts, that in this we be not defective. *Let us love one another, not in word and in tongue, as the Apostle John speaks, but in deed and in truth.* And hereby alone shall we know that we are of the truth, that is, that we are the true disciples of Christ, and shall assure our hearts before him, iii. c. 18. v. but as the same author has observed, in the 17. v. *Who hath this world's goods, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?* If men pretend to a good and charitable spirit, but, at the same time, the natural fruits of it do not appear in their actions, the profession is vain. I speak not now only of almsgiving, tho' that is indeed one great branch of charity, but of all good offices which are the proper expressions of it. Some there are who very evidently shew that they are animated by
 this

this good spirit, and who labour all that S E R M.
is in their power to do good to others; V.
whose charity is not at all confined to relations, or party, or denomination of any kind, but extends to all. These characters are undoubtedly the fairest ornaments of human nature. But are they not rare? Are there not a thousand good offices which men have in the power of their hands to do to their neighbours with very little trouble and expence to themselves, which are neglected? And is this to be expected from the disciples of Christ? But were this all, there were the less to be said; we see men professing Christianity who are injurious to their neighbours, and put them to pain, hurting their interest and estate, or reputation, or both. Sometimes men are led to this by a spirit of malice, and envy, and resentment; sometimes it is done, where there does not appear any malice, from a kind of unnatural pleasure in detracting from others, and giving them uneasiness; as if this were a matter in which men might wantonly divert themselves; and in many cases where interests interfere,

K 2

the

SERM. the selfish spirit so prevails, that they
 V. are for helping themselves at the ex-
 pence of others, and doing the most direct unrighteousness. But is it not natural to ask, what shall be the end of these things? How must men appear to themselves when seriously called to an account by their own consciences? How shall they answer, when called to account before God, who is love, and to whom their temper stands in direct opposition.

But, my Brethren, let it be remembered that God tries the heart. And our abstaining from flagrant instances of injustice on the one hand, or doing many good offices on the other, does not at all satisfy the demands of his law. He requires a principle of cordial love and goodness reigning within, which shall habitually and uniformly direct the conduct. His law is that we should love one another, and from a principle of love do good. Now, I doubt not, but there are very many, whose lives make a fair enough appearance, who if they were to examine themselves impartially, would find great defect in point
 of

of inward principle and affection. **TO SERM.**
 have an ingenuous and hearty concern **V.**
 to do all the good we can to our neigh-
 bour, and to take pains to cultivate
 and strengthen this principle, is, I am
 afraid, a rare thing. And perhaps it is
 as much so, to labour with ourselves in
 casting out concealed envy, and unjust
 aversions and hatred, unchristian resent-
 ments and revenge. Where pride and a
 selfish spirit have place, these are very
 apt to obtain along with them. And
 perhaps men may in a great measure
 overlook, or even indulge them, when
 they are far enough, for many reasons,
 from giving them vent in external in-
 jurious actions. Our care certainly ought
 to be to cleanse the heart: and to do
 this thoroughly will require no small dis-
 cipline: Yet it is necessary, and we can-
 not be accepted of God without it. The
 Apostle *John* teaches us, and it is perfectly
 agreeable to plain sense, that *he who hateth
 his brother, in his heart, is a murtherer;*
 that is, he would be one if not restrained
 by fear of punishment, and so is really
 one in the sight of God, *and no murtherer can
 have eternal life abiding in him.* 1 John iii. 15.

SERM. To this then let us apply ourselves, to
V. root out all those dispositions which are
really of a diabolical nature. *Let us put off
all these, anger, wrath, malice, and filthy com-
munication. Let us put on bowels of mercy,
meekness, long suffering, forbearing one ano-
ther, and forgiving one another, if any man hath
a quarrel against any, as Christ forgave you, so
also do you. Col. iii. 8. And be ye followers of
God as dear children and walk in love, as
Christ also loved you and gave himself for
you an offering and a sacrifice to God of a
sweet smelling savour. Eph. v. 1,*

S E R M O N

priv
distr

SERMON VI.

The tendency of Christianity to deliver men from what distracts the mind and perverts the judgment, and to yield that composure and serenity, which give them the free use of their rational powers.

2 TIM. I. 7.

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear ; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

THE value of a sound mind will be best understood, by considering the deplorable state they are seen to be in, who are deprived of it; and under the power of a distracted imagination, are precipitated in-

SERM. to not only the greatest extravagancies

VI. and wildnesses of conduct, but into the greatest dangers and sufferings. In some cases the distemper rises to such a degree, that men are not only lost to all the purposes of life, with respect to themselves and others; but become so outrageous and hurtful, that violent methods are necessary to restrain them, and prevent the mischief they would do. Many are the different forms in which this distraction of mind appears, some of them much more frightful than others, but all of them most affecting to a serious observer, and they wonderfully shew the frailty of human nature and the vanity of life.

But when the disorders of the mind do not appear in such frightful forms, nor make men quite useless to society, and are in some measure under management and restraint by reason and reflection, yet they may prevail so as to take greatly from the enjoyment of life, and give the persons themselves and their friends great pain; of which we meet with many instances. An unlucky cast of imagination will make a state, otherwise fortunate, very miserable, and render the powers of the mind, though

though perhaps of distinguished eminency **SERM.**
in their several kinds, of very little use **VI.**
to the purposes of society or private life.

O! How happy is it to enjoy a sound and composed mind, to have the free use of the rational powers, and to be able to improve them successfully to the great ends for which they are given us!

I am at present to consider soundness of mind, particularly as the practice of religion is concerned in it, and so far as it may be accounted a virtue. And I shall in the first place, make some observations which tend to give us just notions wherein a sound mind consists. Secondly, I shall shew that the spirit of Christianity is the spirit of a sound mind.

For the first, I humbly think all that can be meant by soundness of mind may be comprehended under two heads, viz. our being able to judge of things justly and according to nature, and our cleaving steadily to such judgments, and pursuing them in the conduct of life.

First, our being able to judge of things justly and according to truth and nature. This is the main thing. For if the matters, concerning which we are called to judge, appear

SERM. appear in a wrong light, and we are led

VI. astray by a delusive imagination and false appearances, although in matters of meer speculation, this may be attended with no bad consequences, yet with respect to practice and the conduct of life, especially in affairs of importance, it must be exceedingly hurtful. Some men have originally weak minds, have little penetration, and are easily imposed upon; others have a great natural sagacity, and can enter deep into the matters proposed to them, searching things to the bottom, and are not easily deceived; and it is with pleasing wonder we hear such persons speak upon the subjects on which their minds have been exercised, pursuing truth and discovering it through much darkness and perplexity, and setting things in such a light, as makes it clear and plain to those who could not have gone any length in their own inquiries. But so far as weakness or strength of judgment are the necessary consequences of the original make of the mind, and the various measure of abilities with which men are endowed, they do not so properly come under consideration at present. What the subject naturally leads to,

to, is, to consider how the mind may be affected by things which are evidently in some measure in our power, what influence they may have to darken and perplex or distract it, and how these disorders may be removed, and the mind preserved in composure and the free use of our rational powers.

Our daily observations upon human life must fully convince us, that passions of all kinds have a tendency to distract the mind and pervert the judgment. All undue vehemencies of them are necessarily attended with perturbation. So that men are not masters of themselves, nor have the free use of their powers. How many instances of this have we seen, where anger, fear, grief, melancholy, love, or any passion whatsoever, has got the ascendant, and been suffered to arise to an over-grown strength and vehemency. In proportion to that irregularity, the mind is lost to itself, and can form no sound judgment. For not only does the inward perturbation which always attends vehement passion, disorder and discompose the mind, and render it incapable of acting its part; but the prevailing passion does likewise give it

SERM.

VI.

SERM. it a particular bias, with which impartial

VI. and sound judgment cannot consist. Things are set in a false and delusive light, and men are accordingly affected. And we see that men of the soundest minds in other respects, yet in those matters in which a particular passion has dominion over them, will think very wildly, and act a part which to all impartial on-lookers appears quite out of nature and distracted. Is not anger a real madness, when it arises to the higher degrees? How mean and foolish a part will fear make men act when they are under the power of it? How extravagant the wildnesses of a melancholy imagination? Let men be ever so capable of judging and conducting themselves in other respects, yet when any of these passions has possession of the mind, the object will always appear in an unfair light, either different from what it really is, or greatly aggravated, or, in some cases, as much lessened; and so the judgment is led astray, and in consequence of that, the conduct must be wrong and unnatural. This appears the most signally, and I may add most reproachfully, when self-love and the private affections are so strong, as to make

make men always partial in judgment, SERM.
when their own interest is concerned, and VI.
capable of doing manifest injustice to o-
thers, even perhaps with the approbation
of their own minds ; such an approbation
as is the effect of that delusive mist, which
self-love casts over the understanding, and
by which the mind is quite perverted. It
is really astonishing to observe, how men
think, and will speak upon matters where
their minds are under such powerful biases,
incapable of being convinced by reason,
and representing things as differently from
what they really are, as light is from dark-
ness. The mind in such a state is in no
wise to be trusted.

Farther, we are frequently led astray by
prejudices and false associations of ideas.
Whatever ways of thinking men have
been long accustomed to, especially from
their infancy, and which they have re-
ceived as true, upon the authority of teach-
ers of whom they have a high esteem, it
is very hard to get rid of. This appears
in matters of religion above all other
things. How obstinately do men continue
in errors, the most glaring and absurd, and
of which the least degree of impartial
consideration

SERM. consideration might convince them, only
VI. because they have been so taught to believe, and to account it a dangerous thing to believe otherwise? This prejudice is often seen to prevail even in men of wisdom and judgment, so as to make them embrace as truth, and earnestly contend for, the greatest absurdities; of which there are various instances in the superstitions of the heathen world; and many likewise in the history of the christian church. For certainly nothing in the superstition of any heathens could be more absurd, than some opinions which are received, and contended for by some denominations of christians. But the power of prejudice and the influence of false associations of ideas appear in other matters, and in which one would think a person of common understanding might be easily undeceived. The instance commonly given is a full illustration of this. What connexion is there in reason or nature between darkness and ghosts? And yet men who have been accustomed to this association of ideas from their infancy, have, many of them, found it very hard to get rid of it, so as to be perfectly easy in darkness,

ness, if alone; and some have never been able to endure it. But it is of far greater moment to observe, that such false associations are seen to prevail in the mind in matters of very great importance in human life; to prevail so generally, that it is rare to find one quite free from them. What connexion in the world is there between great wealth and the true enjoyment of human life? What connexion in reason, between the many phantastical distinctions which obtain in it, and true happiness? And yet we see many are so much under the influence of such prejudice, that they account life utterly miserable without them. I do not say but wealth, and honour, and power, may be improved to good purposes, or that they are not desirable upon account of many comforts and conveniencies which they furnish; but to place the happiness of human life in them, is just as great an absurdity, and as much a contradiction to nature, as can be. And how much mischief is done by such associations of ideas, when they so prevail as to regulate mens sentiments and conduct? How many of the sorrows of life, how many of the fears, how much of the envy and strife,
how

SERM. how much of the injustice and oppression

VI. which appear in life, must be ascribed to them? Happy is the man, who has got so much the mastery of all prejudices of this kind, as to be able to embrace truth and nature in his judgments and sentiments; ever following sound reason and that only, and bringing all his opinions whatsoever to the test of it.

Again, there are some very bad consequences to the judgment and conduct, which follow upon a certain impatience of thought, and rashness in judging, which are not uncommon. Some men are very happy in natural abilities, but these are in a great measure lost to them, because they cannot be at pains to use them in the best manner. There is a labour in serious thinking which they cannot bear; to examine things closely and to compare them with attention and exactness, to pursue the truth through many deductions and consequences, is too hard a task; and so, with a certain levity of mind, they are apt to rest in the first appearances, and to take up with whatsoever plausible opinion first offers; and thus it comes to pass that they are often deceived, and men with a far less measure of abilities, by patience of

of thought, will understand more and judge better than they. There are many things

S E R M.
VI.

in which this rashness in judging will appear only foolish, and cannot be hurtful; but in matters of importance in the conduct of life, especially in matters which concern the practice of religion, it is often very pernicious. And it is really strange, to think how rare a thing it is for men, to accustom themselves to close and serious meditation. There are very many who, one would be tempted to imagine, never thought at all to any purpose; who discover so many odd inconsistencies, and such weakness of judgment, even in things which are obvious and easily understood, and are so much strangers to what nature itself must teach every one who will attend to it, that the improvement of the mind appears to be that which has been least of all regarded. Sound wisdom is not thus to be obtained. *They who seek her early shall find her. They who wait at the posts of her doors;* but the negligent and unthinking must be content to go without that valuable treasure.

These things which greatly hurt the mind, and tend to pervert the judgment, I

L

have

SERMON. have laid before you, because, as it will afterwards appear, that the spirit of Christianity is the spirit of a sound mind, as it tends to deliver us from those disorders which are inconsistent with it; so the mentioning of these disorders, by which the judgment is depraved, will contribute to shew wherein soundness of mind in this respect consists. When a man is composed and serene in his thoughts, when the mind is not in a state of perturbation by any vehemencies of passion, nor under a bias from it; when unjust prejudices are removed, and false associations of ideas are broke through; when patience of thought and inquiry prepares a man for a close attendance to reason and the best improvement of his thinking powers; then he is prepared for forming sound judgments, and following truth and reason in his sentiments and opinions.

And men of this happy turn of mind, are the most likely to cleave with steadiness to the judgments they form, and pursue them in the conduct of life; which was the other thing I mentioned as entering into the notion of a sound mind. To be obstinately fixed in any judgments we have

have formed, where we have not, and SERM.
cannot have certainty; and not to lie open VI.
to conviction and the means of it, is a
very great weakness; and an assuming
what does not at all become such short-
sighted creatures, and who are in such
danger of being imposed upon, even when
pains are taken to judge according to
truth. On the other hand levity and in-
constancy, giddiness and inconsistency in
sentiment, are very reproachful faults, and
very distant from soundness of mind.
And the very best abilities are, in a great
measure, lost to the fickle and inconstant.
Their conduct, as their sentiments, will
be quite uncertain, and men are never sure
of them. This has not only an appear-
ance greatly to their disadvantage, but
is in many cases very hurtful. The resolu-
tions being unstable, the best designs may
be lost; designs inconvenient and evil may,
as the present fancy directs, be pursued;
truth and nature are not followed; and as
the beauty of human life in that case, so
the valuable purposes of it are in great
danger of being lost. It becomes a sound
mind to follow reason, and to be flexible to
nothing else; to be steady in sentiment

SERMON and conduct; never to vary without rea-

VL son; never to change but when there is reason; this shews a right mind; it makes life uniform and beautiful, and it is the sure way to success, with respect to the important purposes of it. But before I leave this head of discourse, I would observe in the last place,

That nothing has by wise men been accounted more hurtful, or inconsistent with a sound mind, than enthusiasm in matters of religion. The proper notion of this, is indeed, a religious madness; and in some it produces not only great perturbation of mind, but most amazing agitations of body too; so that they seem indeed to be in a phrenzy; their appearances frightful to the on-lookers, and very hard to be accounted for. Into what wild extravagancies that strange spirit is capable of leading men, has been seen in many instances. It is very astonishing that it should get so much the better of reason and common sense. But where the distemper has not risen to such a heighth, yet it has produced very untoward symptoms in those, in whom it has to any degree prevailed; and been the cause of much disquietude,

as well as of leading them into very great errors in conduct. But however, this spirit ought to be carefully guarded against, and is in truth most distant from the true spirit of Christianity; yet such, as under the pretence of opposing enthusiasm, set themselves to run down, under that opprobrious name, all emotions of mind, all ardours of spirit in matters of religion, certainly go into a very dangerous extreme. Some persons may be of a much cooler temper than others, and not easily moved or affected; but that true religion has a tendency to produce ardour and emotion of spirit, is, I think perfectly evident; and according to the present constitution of human nature it cannot be otherwise. Let any man of sense, especially of tenderness and delicacy of sentiment and passion, peruse the lives of some great men, and their heroic actions, and he will certainly find not only a cool approbation of them, but most sensible emotions of spirit. Such impressions will be made upon the mind, as will have a very discernable effect upon what is usually called the animal spirits. And he will find,

SERMON. admiration, love, sympathy with these

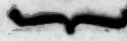
VI.

great men in suffering, or joy in their success, rise to a very high degree, and I should not call it calmness, but insensibility, not to be moved by such characters and actions. Now, when we consider those objects of affection which religion, especially the christian religion, presents, we cannot, after having observed this constitution of the human mind, but imagine that there must be very natural emotions of the believing mind in conversing with them. Where have we amongst the sons of men any character like that of our Saviour? Here is inconceivable worth and perfect innocence in the deepest distress, bearing it in the best manner, to serve the most valuable purposes. Here is the greatest and wisest mind in conjunction with the best and the tenderest heart; the Son of God and heir of all things appearing a man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs; we see him at last expiring upon a cross. We see him afterwards triumphing over death with the dignity which became him, and ascending up on high. This is our Saviour, our most tender and affectionate friend, the blessed

bleſſed meſſenger of peace and immor-
tality. Now will any man ſay it is nat-
tural and juſt to be moved with the
ſtory of a *Brutus* or an *Epaminondas*, and
not to be greatly moved with that of
Jeſus? Shall we, in the laſt caſe, call it
by the reproachful name of enthuiſaſm,
which, in the former, we commend as in-
dicating an amiable ſenſibility and tender-
neſs of heart. But when we aſcend higher,
and conſider the counſels of divine wiſ-
dom and goodneſs, and the various glory
of the Creator in framing and contriving
the ſyſtem of the univerſe, and carrying
it into execution by the irreſiſtible energy
of his power; when we conſider that im-
meſe mind which is every where preſent,
every where active, eternal perfect wiſ-
dom, harmony and order; muſt we not
be ſtruck with the higheſt admiration?
And ſhall this be called enthuiſaſm? We
evidently ſee in the ſcriptures both of
the old and new teſtament the expreſſions
of great ardours of love to God and the
Redeemer, and of admiration and joy
which often riſes into perfect rapture:
and it is impoſſible it ſhould be otherwiſe,
where men have any delicacy and tender-

SERMON
VI.

SERMONS of sentiment. We know that all

VI.  passions, when raised, are attended with emotion, and it accompanies religious passions as well as others. I am very sensible and it ought to be carefully observed, that the substance and life of religion consists in a conformity of heart, and conduct, to the will of God; that there may be vehement emotions of mind where this is in a great measure wanting; and that it may be, where it is not attended with such ardours as others feel. So that no man is to judge of his moral state, by these affections of his spirit only, but by a consciousness of his departing from evil in his heart, and of his doing good. But though this is true, yet it does not at all follow, that the glorious and matchless objects to which religion, and especially christianity, directs our thoughts, are not fitted to excite passions of the noblest kind, and to raise them to great strength. If it be asked how we shall distinguish between these and irrational enthusiasm, or religious madness or phrenzy, I answer, the only test is truth and reason. When men hold any principles which are really false and can be proved to be so, and have

apparently

apparently wrong notions of divine objects, and unjust associations of ideas concerning them; whatever zeal or emotion they discover, this is all enthusiasm. But when our passions of the religious kind are raised by a just representation of divine objects to the mind, and the belief of things which we evidently perceive to be true, then the more our hearts are warmed, 'tis certainly the better. This sort of enthusiasm, if it must be called so, will never hurt our understandings, or weaken our rational powers, but strengthen them rather. It will never break in upon the composure of our minds, but will be the security of it, attended with light and serenity and peace. And to add no more, there may be such a coolness in religion, even while men support the profession, and maintain the forms of it, as makes it good for nothing; which is always the case where, by the love of God, it does not form the mind into his likeness, and hallow all the active powers to the practice of virtue. And when men are in such a state, not cool in religious matters, but cold and insensible, whatever contempt they may pour on enthusiasm,

SERM. enthusiasm, they themselves are in a state

VI. no wise better, and which must end most fatally.

I proceed to the second subject of discourse, namely, to shew that the spirit of christianity is the spirit of a sound mind. Upon this I shall not insist long.

Christianity has an excellent tendency to restrain those vain imaginations, and unruly passions, which so much distract the minds, in which they reign, and pervert the judgment. The laws of it forbid all irregular vehemencies; and the genius of christianity raises the heart and desires, and directs the mind to those glorious objects, which in their nature above all things engage. And when the heart is fixed upon them, as the most excellent, and worthy of our best affections; passions for inferior objects, and these only are dangerous to the mind, lose their strength and no longer enslave the soul, or rage in it. Once *the love of the Father* has the ascendant, *the love of the world, and the things of the world*, and that unhappy train of passions which attend it, will be trampled upon. And as no passions do so disturb and disorder the spirit,

the Spirit of Wisdom and a sound Mind.

155

as those which are impure and directly S. B. R. M.
sinful, so the purity of the christian spi- VI.
rit is a noble preservative from them.

And by *cleansing the heart from all filthi-
ness of flesh and spirit*, secures the tran-
quillity of the understanding, and main-
tains and supports the authority of reason
and sound judgment; not to speak of
the great advantage, which must arise to
the rational powers, from that abstinence
from vice, into which corrupt passions
unrestrained by conscience, hurry men;
that abstinence, I say, to which the laws
of christianity bind us. It is observed by
the prophet Hos. iv. 11. *that whoredom and
wine take away the heart*; that is, corrupt
the affections, and spoil the taste, pollut-
ing the soul, and rendering it abominable.
But it may be truly said, that they hurt
the understanding also, and greatly enfee-
ble the rational powers; they darken the
mind and make it impatient of thought
and inquiry; and consequently, which is
often the case, prepare men for thinking
and acting in a manner which sober reason
abhors. The purity of the heart and
manners, therefore, must be most friend-
ly to the understanding, and have a be-
nign

S.E.R.M. high influence upon the powers of the mind, to preserve them in strength and vigour, habile and fit to serve the important ends for which they were bestowed upon us.

VI.

In the second place, christianity tends to make the mind and judgment sound, as it begets tranquillity of soul and a pleasing serenity. There is in it a peace which passeth all understanding. It sets before us the most comfortable prospects; it gives us the most joyful hopes. In these the believing mind rests satisfied, and has the peaceful enjoyment of itself. Now, this serene and joyful calm of the soul, just the reverse of painful tumult and perturbation, most admirably aids the understanding, and gives a man the full use of his rational faculties. Whatever disturbs the mind, darkens and hurts it; whatever tends to compose and make the state pleasing, encourages and strengthens it. Let a man be under the power of care and anxiety; suppose him entangled and perplexed, in a disquieting and hopeless state, and oh, how distant will he find himself from a sound mind and judgment! These cannot dwell beside hurry and

con-

confusion, and love harmony, order, and peace. And the religion of Christ when practised in sincerity, as it tends to calm all the passions, to deliver men from all perturbation, especially from painful anxiety and solicitude, and to diffuse joy and serenity through the soul, must likewise tend to prepare men for forming sound judgments, and to think and act according to truth and nature. There is no occasion to multiply words in shewing the importance of this; a sound and serene mind are so nearly allied in nature, that every man who reflects upon himself must be sensible of it; and, how much we owe to that religion which has presented us with such prospects, and such issues of life, as perfectly quiet the believing and virtuous mind in all circumstances, and makes it reasonable in *all things to give thanks and rejoice.*

But, in the third place what is most of all to be insisted on, is this, that true religion fixes mens minds right with respect to the great ends of life, and the methods of pursuing them with success. For this reason it is, no doubt, that in the writings of Solomon, religion has generally

the

SER. M. the name of wisdom given it. And it is

VI. indeed true wisdom. For it certainly answers the most valuable ends of it. Let a man be supposed ever so weak with respect to intellectual abilities; yet, if he is truly religious, he will certainly do right, and act a wise part in the most important of all concerns. He will think and act according to truth and nature. It has been often observed, by good judges of human life, that plain honesty frequently supplies the room of sagacity and penetration in the common affairs of life, and that, by acting a worthy and good part, men shall come better off, than they could, by all the cunning imaginable, without integrity. But, supposing in many affairs they should be quite at a loss, it makes no great matter, if, with respect to the principal business of life, they judge right, and succeed. He is always to be accounted a wise man, who judgeth right in matters of the greatest importance, and which most concern him. And if he discovers a sound mind in these, all is well. The principles of natural religion, to men who can pursue them, will afford good and safe

safe direction in judging and acting. But S E R M.
VI.
christianity has cast so clear a light upon

all these matters, and given direction so full and clear, that no one who is acquainted with it can be at a loss in judging, and no one who pursues the dictates of it, can fail of success. So that the spirit of christianity, is indeed the spirit of a sound mind; for it fixes men in right judgments, and according to truth and soberness; and sets their way so clear before them, that, as the Prophet speaks, *a way-faring man though a fool shall not err therein.* Isa. xxxv. 8.

Nor does it less contribute to make men steadfast in pursuing the way it chalks out to them. For it furnishes the noblest and most engaging motives. It deters men from contrary courses by the most alarming threatnings. As the spirit of christianity prevails, the love of the world and all its ensnaring lusts are weakened and die. The relish is formed for the pure pleasures of virtue and holiness, and the mind engaged by a sense of the greatest gain in it. Men are encouraged to hold on their course by the repeated promises of divine assistance, and that a mighty power is upon their side which will never leave

SERMON. leave nor forsake them. So that christianity tends to establish and confirm the mind in good resolutions, to make the life uniform, and preserve men from that giddy inconstancy, of which a sound mind is abhorrent. *The path of the just is as a shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.* Prov. iv. 18. The spirit of Christ *stablishes, strengthens, settles men,* so that they are *stedfast, immoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.* This is the evident tendency of that spirit; and this is all that I shall say to shew that it is the spirit of a sound mind.

I shall conclude the discourse with this one observation, namely, that hence we may learn how to judge of those characters, who despise serious religion, and are ready to treat such as make it their business in life, with scoff and ridicule. Some do this from an impure and vain imagination which has dominion over them; pleasure and jollity, and the gratification of sense and its appetites, is all that they seem to set their hearts upon. And for strict virtue and religion, it is at the greatest possible distance from their thoughts. They have a paradise of their own framing

ing, and this is all they desire. Others are of a quite different turn, though equally unfriendly to religion. The world and the spirit of it have them in possession; they study to manage their affairs with sagacity and penetration, and value themselves upon this. Gain is the only substantial thing in their esteem, let them succeed in this one thing, and for the mighty prospects virtue and religion give, they will easily compound the matter, and let who will possess themselves of them and enjoy them. *Who will strew unto us any good*, is the constant cry, but with respect to conscience, and the favour of God, and an unseen world, they are easy. As if it were a jest that any of these things should be worth their care.

But let men think and say what they will, under the power of corrupt prejudice, one thing is certain, that, as men, we are obliged to listen to reason and nature, and be directed by them. Now, the principles upon which religion rests are as evident as any moral principles can be; such as the being of a God, our relation to him as the subjects of his moral government, the eternal differences between

M

good

SERM. good and evil, the various affections of
 VI. the human heart, the tendency of virtue
 to make men happy, and such things as
 these. Can any man look upon these
 principles as ridiculous? Any man who
 is not perfectly an atheist? But if there is
 sober truth in them, is it indeed acting
 a wise part to be negligent of them, to
 conduct life in direct opposition to the
 tendency of them? Is not this the great-
 est absurdity and folly? But, if men be-
 lieve they are true, is it not quite unac-
 countable that they should not attend to
 them, and be influenced by them? Now,
 if we cleave to the principles of natural
 religion as truth, we shall find that they
 point to the same conduct of life with the
 religion of Christ, and shall be prepared
 to embrace this with gladness, as an in-
 stitution attended with great advantages;
 and shall find that in acting the part of
 sincere christians, we act agreeable to truth
 and nature, and as men; so that indeed
 the spirit of christianity, is the spirit of
 wisdom and a sound mind. This is the
*wisdom which is from above, which is pure,
 and peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreat-
 ed, full of good fruits, without partiality, and
 without hypocrisy.* Jam. iii. 17.

S E R M O N

SERMON VII.

The Nature of the Human Soul;
that it is a substance different
from matter; of the Faculties of
it, and particularly of the Opera-
tions of the Understanding.

MATTHEW XVI. 26.

*For what is a man profited, if he shall
gain the whole world, and lose his own
Soul? Or what shall a man give in ex-
change for his Soul.*

EVERY where around us, in his
works, we see most manifest traces
of the wisdom and goodness and
power of God; and indeed all
his works praise him and speak his high
perfections. But they are no where so
M a conspicuously

SERM. conspicuously displayed in this world, as
VII. in the human frame and powers. The
structure of our bodies is wonderful, but
that of our minds much more so. It is
in this respect principally that man is
made but a little lower than the Angels,
and crowned with glory and honour; and
the human soul is more peculiarly con-
siderable in the works of God, as it is
formed for an eternal duration of being;
and shall subsist with all its powers and
faculties for ever. Now, when we add
to this, that it is capable of very high
happiness in that eternal existence, and
also susceptible of great unutterable mi-
sery; and that the one, or the other,
shall be every person's portion, according
to his moral conduct in this world; this
shews the infinite importance of a person's
conducting himself aright: And more-
over, how utterly insignificant and con-
temptible any thing a man can gain in
this world, all the world, if he could gain
and make it his property, if he must on
account of it *lose his own soul*; that is,
make himself eternally wretched. If a
person is supposed under a sentence of
condemnation to such endless misery, what
would

would he not give in exchange for his soul, **SERM.**
and as the price of his redemption? For, **VII.**
adds our Saviour, in the following words,
*the Son of Man shall come in the glory of
his Father, with his Angels, and then shall
he reward every man according to his works.*
To them, as the Apostle Paul hath ex-
pressed it, *Rom. ii. 7. Who by patient con-
tinuance in well-doing seek for glory, and
honour, and immortality, eternal life; but to
them who do not obey the truth, but obey
unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tri-
bulation and anguish, upon every soul of man
who doth evil, of the Jew first and also of
the Gentile; for there is no respect of
persons with God.*

These words lay before us, what to us
is the most important of all subjects; and
I propose to discourse upon it in the fol-
lowing method.

First, To consider the nature and fa-
culties of the human soul, in which the
original excellency of it appeareth.

Secondly, To shew that the happiness
or misery of it in an endless duration,
is to be the result of the moral state and
conduct.

SERM. Thirdly, According to our Saviour's design, shew of what infinite moment to us it is, that our souls should be saved from perdition, and inherit that happiness which is promised to the wise and good.

VII.

First, It is proposed to consider the nature and faculties of the human soul, or of that in us, which is the principle of sensation, of thought, of reasoning, of choice and of action ; and which is the seat of many various instincts and affections. What these are, we cannot but know from reflection and experience. But when we come to inquire into the substance or being which is endowed with these powers, we shall find it an inquiry not easily satisfied. The very truth is, that we know nothing of the essence or substance, strictly speaking, of any being whatever ; many of the properties of various things we see clearly ; but with regard to the subject in which they are inherent, we are absolute strangers. To take the most obvious instance of this, what so familiar to us as matter or body ? We think we know it in its various kinds with which we are daily conversant ; but
when

when we come to consider with our-
selves, and reflect with some exactness,
we shall find, that all we know is only

SERM.
VII.

the colour, the shape, the weight, and the manner in which one part of matter is seen to affect another, when applied to it; and such other things which are only the properties of body; but what the internal constitution or essence of it is we know not. In the same manner with respect to mind, or that which is the principle of reasoning, of choosing and willing, and of acting, we know perfectly these by reflection; but that essence which is the subject of them, we know not. I have taken particular notice of this, as an introduction to an inquiry, which is of great consequence in treating of the soul of man; namely, whether it is a material or immaterial substance; or in other words, whether it is corporeal, or of a substance different in kind, and to which we give the name of spirit. I say this inquiry seems to be of great consequence; for if all which is in us is matter or body, when we only attend to the dissolution of the animal frame, it is natural enough to conclude, indeed upon

SERM. that supposition, one cannot but conclude,

VII. that there is an end of the man. But if there is lodged in these bodies a mind, which is of a substance or essence intirely distinct from body, and that may subsist independent of it, then quite other thoughts and views will be suggested to us. Some have pleaded that body, and the mechanism of it's parts, and animal life, is the whole of man; and therefore that at death, his being, considered as man, is terminated. But in opposition to this miserably low way of thinking, concerning human nature, the greatest part of the wisest and most knowing of mankind have thought, and strongly argued, that the human soul is a principle intirely different from any thing material, and for it's subsistence quite independent of body; and it must be owned that their arguments are very strong, and amount to the highest degree of probability. If I give the sum of them in a few plain words, I hope it will not be accounted an improper digression.

It has been already observed, that we do not know the real essence of any thing; of body, more than we do of Spirit; but that we know only their

their properties. Now, when we observe the properties of what we call mind, such as a power of thinking, reasoning, choosing, and willing; and observe the affections which discover themselves in the heart of man; we must see that they are intirely different from those properties which we discern in body, I may say, opposite to them; such as shape, colour, hardness or softness, and such other things. Indeed, the properties of matter which are known to us seem quite incompatible with mind; if a man were to talk of the length or breadth, of the shape or colour of thought, he must render himself very ridiculous; or of thinking or reasoning, as white or black, as round or angular, as hard or soft. Now, when we see that the properties of matter do in no sort agree with those of mind, or the thinking principle, but are indeed contrary to them, is it not unavoidable that we conclude the subjects, in which these contrary qualities subsist, must be perfectly different from one another? I had almost said it is impossible, they can be the same thing.

Farther,

SERM. Farther, it has been really demon-

VII. strated, that a resistance to motion is essential to matter, and that therefore it cannot move it self, cannot act, but is always acted upon by some power, which therefore is essentially different from it self. But as every one is sensible of the acting of his own soul, so he must conclude that his soul, whatever it be, is a thing essentially different from matter or body. In a word, if we had nothing but matter in the world, we should never have had motion or activity; and to ascribe activity to that, to which a resistance to all motion is essential, is indeed a very great absurdity. Again, we know by reflection, that the mind is one simple undivided principle, the same at all times; it is one thing or being; now, it is apparent, there can be in matter no such thing as one undivided principle: the infinite divisibility of it excludeth this intirely; so that it cannot be the subject of, but must be a thing essentially different from, mind, and thought.

These arguments I have mentioned in the most summary way possible; they are much enlarged upon in the writings of those authors who have carefully

carefully applied their thoughts to them; and have been set in such a light, that the truth seems to have been demonstrated: SERM.
VII.

But as they may perhaps appear a little too abstracted for such a discourse, I shall not farther enlarge; but cannot help observing, that if nature doth afford sufficient proofs in this great point, they are very well worthy of being attended to; and will the better prepare the mind for receiving the great principles of the christian faith.

The opinions contrary to what I have been asserting, are in truth very prejudicial; for if a person is once persuaded, that there is nothing in his whole composition but matter put into motion, the transition is very easy, from this, to a persuasion, that when the bodily frame is dissolved, and there is a cessation of motion in it, then the man is no more: And upon these principles what must have become of the religion of the antients? Indeed, where men are by revelation assured of the resurrection of the dead, there the belief a future state may be consistent with a notion that the mind is material, or, which to the purposes of morality and religion is the same thing, cannot

SERM. cannot act out of, or independent of body.

VII. But why should any one, unless forced to it by the appearances, the manifest appearances of truth, entertain a notion, by which many of the arguments, taken from the light of nature, for a future state are given up at once, and the great stress laid upon that revelation, with which a great part of the world have never been favoured? This is not at all serving the interests of religion. Yet this is a cause in which some moderns have engaged with great zeal, as being most favourable to revelation; in which there appears to me to be a very dangerous mistake; and if we will give heed to the plain doctrines of the new testament in this great matter, we shall see, that they are perfectly agreeable to the principles which have been laid down in this discourse; for there a separate state of the soul, between the dissolution of the body by death, and the resurrection of it, is clearly taught; indeed so clearly, that it is a wonder how believers can resist this evidence. I shall quote to this purpose but a very few passages. The expression of our blessed Saviour upon the cross to the penitent thief

is very remarkable, Luke xxiii. 43. *Verily I say unto thee, to day shalt thou be with me in paradise*; not in a state of insensibility surely, or in a state of non-existence; that is no paradise, and no one will imagine that our blessed Lord was in such a state. There are also some passages in the writings of the apostle Paul, which are very clear and strong, 2 Cor. v. 6. *Therefore we are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord; for we walk by faith, not by sight; we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord; wherefore we labour, that whether we be present or absent, we may be accepted of him.* Is it to be present with the Lord, to be in a state of insensibility? Or if that were the case, could it ever enter into the apostle's mind to speak in this strain? That he had most certainly an idea of the soul's subsisting and acting out of the body, is plain likewise from his expressions in the 12th Chapter of this Epistle, 2d. verse. *I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, whether in the body, I cannot tell, or out of the body, I cannot tell, God knoweth; such an one caught*
up

SERM. *up to the third heaven; and I knew such a*
VII *man, whether in the body or out of the body;*
I cannot tell, God knoweth; how that he was
caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable
words, which it is not possible for a man to
utter. Now, if it had not been his opi-
 nion, that the spirit could be sensible, and
 act, out of body, he could have been at
 no loss to know that he was not out of
 the body, no loss at all. It is likewise in
 very strong terms that he expresseth him-
 self in the first chapter of the epistle to
 the Phillippians, 21 ver. *To me to live is*
Christ, and to die is gain; but if I live in
the flesh, this is the fruit of my labour; yet
what I shall choose, I wot not; for I am in
a strait betwixt two, having a desire to de-
part and to be with Christ, which is far bet-
ter; nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more
needful for you. Now, who can imagine,
 that by the apostle's departing and being
 with Christ, he meant being in a state of
 utter insensibility? No surely, he meant
 a state in which he should have a much
 better enjoyment of himself than ever he
 had upon earth. So the author of the
 Epistle to the Hebrews, chap. 12. ver. 22.
But you are come unto mount Zion, to the city
of

of the living God, to the heavenly Jerusalem, SERM.
 and to an innumerable company of angels, to VII.
 the general assembly and church of the first
 born, whose names are written in heaven,
 and to God the judge of all, and to the spi-
 rits of just men made perfect. Surely these
 spirits of the just, made perfect, have a
 capacity of sensation and action. I shall
 not mention any more passages of scrip-
 ture. These clearly enough prove that
 the spirit is really a different thing
 from the body, and can subsist and be
 happy without it; and no doubt be mi-
 serable too; and this hath been the sense
 of the church in all ages: They had in-
 deed an opinion, and for this there want-
 eth not reason, that the spirits of good
 men, in the intermediate state, had not the
 completion of their blifs; had not their
 full reward, till the resurrection and the
 general judgment; and that this should
 be the commencement of their perfect fe-
 licity; but no one dreamed of their in-
 termediate state, as a state of utter in-
 sensibility, which is indeed contrary to
 the dictates of reason, as well as of the
 holy scriptures. Let us rest assured, that
 what in us thinketh and acteth, what is
 the

SERM. the seat of sentiment and affection, is a
 VII. thing different from matter, and not to
 be affected, so as to be destroyed and de-
 prived of its powers, by the dissolution
 of the material frame: and when our
 Maker called us at first into existence,
 and gave us to be men, he conferred
 this gift upon us, as what was never to
 be recalled.

Having thus said a few things concern-
 ing the nature of the human soul; let
 us in the next place, take a view of the
 powers and faculties, with which our
 Maker hath endowed us; this may, in
 several respects, be pleasing and profit-
 able. It is pleasing to think how bounti-
 ful our Maker hath been to us, and how
 he hath distinguished us above all the
 other creatures in this world; it is not
 possible to survey this work of God, with-
 out seeing such contrivance and wisdom,
 such variety and uniformity in it, and
 such beauty, as must excite pleasing ad-
 miration in our minds: and it must be
 extremely profitable, to be well acquaint-
 ed with our frame and powers, and the
 improvement they are capable of to the
 great ends of life; which ends, that very
 frame

frame and those powers clearly enough **SERM.**
point out to us. **VII.**

Under this head I shall distinctly consider the understanding, the will, and the affections.

First, the understanding; that faculty, by which we receive the ideas or perceptions of things, by which we judge concerning them, and acquire the knowledge of truth. Sometimes the agreement or disagreement of our ideas compared together, or, in other words, the truth or falsehood of what we are to judge concerning, is so clear, that it forceth in a manner the assent; and it is impossible that any doubt should remain. This is the case in all those things where the truth is self evident. But in many more instances, we cannot come by the knowledge of the truth, without reasoning and argument, and from things which are certain, deducing other truths by way of consequence; and the faculty of doing this is of the greatest use; it is indeed inconceivable what fields of knowledge are laid open to us by it, and what pleasure the mind sometimes hath in such operations; as is apparent in the various
N sciences.

SERM. sciences. But the knowledge we attain would comparatively yield us little pleasure or advantage, if there was not a power in the mind of retaining it. What a vast and melancholy difference between such as discover a capacity of judging and reasoning, but immediately lose the remembrance of what they have been engaged in; which is not unfrequently the case in the declensions of nature; what a vast difference, I say, between them, and such as have a clear remembrance of what hath passed in their minds, and to whom, the knowledge they have attained, is always a ready treasure! As there is nothing in the human frame more wonderful than this power of retaining so many different things in the mind, without confusion, and of calling them up to notice at pleasure; so there is scarcely any power more useful. Without it indeed, all our labours after knowledge would be in a great measure lost, and human nature would not only be a most unfinished thing, but the very common business of life could not be carried on. I have to add, that the application of our knowledge to practice, and to serve the purposes

purposes of life, is what we call wisdom: SERM.

when men judiciously propose ends of VII.
 action to themselves, and pursue those

ends by such means as are proper, and likely to be effectual; in this, what we commonly call sound judgment appeareth.

But it ought to be attended to, that the fixing the great and ultimate ends of life is not the work of mere understanding or reason; for here the heart and affections have the largest share, as will afterwards appear. But I meant only to mention, not to enlarge upon these things; which every one will be abundantly sensible of by reflecting on the operations of his own mind.

What I would principally enlarge on, are the observations and reflections which naturally offer themselves upon this subject.

And first, As God giveth to men the powers of understanding and of acquiring knowledge, which *Elihu* very justly, in the book of *Job*, ascribeth to the inspiration of the Almighty; so he hath, according to his sovereign will and pleasure, given to different persons different measures of it; to some great penetra-

SERM. tion and acuteness in judging, and a mind
VII. capable of attaining to very high degrees
of knowledge; to others a much smaller
capacity, who learn with difficulty, and
who cannot judge with exactness. This
variety in the measure of the intellectual
abilities, is evident and obvious to all;
and the attainments in knowledge may be
expected, generally speaking, to be pro-
portionable; it will be always so, where
the means of improvement and the ap-
plication of the powers to the use of them
are equal: and indeed, upon discipline and
improvement a great deal dependeth. It
is often seen that persons to whom na-
ture hath not been very bountiful in her
gifts, have by a very careful improve-
ment of the scanty measure they have
received, far exceeded others, of powers
and abilities originally much superior.
But whatever difference different degrees
of improvement may make, yet certainly
there is a very great and conspicuous dif-
ference in the measure of the natural
gifts, and in the particular cast of the
mind to certain kinds of science. This
original difference is to be ascribed to
the sovereign pleasure of our Maker only,

who

who in this giveth no account of his matters. There is as great sovereignty in this, as in determining the original measure of the stature, or the natural strength of the vessels of the human body ; and to the will of our Maker, in all these appointments, we must, as his creatures and subjects, humbly submit ; and remember that we are accountable to him only for the talents we have received, and not for what we have not received. To have a small and scanty measure of abilities is no man's fault, but not to improve what he hath, in the best manner he can, is blame worthy. And indeed we see, that eminency in the powers and faculties of the mind, is often like eminency in other things ; it proves unhappiness and misery to men, as it betrays them into great snares, and makes them capable of doing mischief, to which, without such gifts, they would not have been equal.

But secondly, how pretious is the gift of such an extensive capacity of knowledge as our Maker hath conferred on mankind ! I speak now of the common measure of abilities ; a

N 3

capacity

SERM. capacity so extensive, that even in our
VII. imaginations we cannot set any certain limits to it; never have we learn'd so much, but that we are capable of learning more; and with the advances men make in knowledge, the capacity of receiving more is seen to extend itself and grow. Now, as we are made for an eternal duration of being, and the eternal use of our active powers, what a pleasing prospect doth this open to us! How delightful is knowledge to the mind, as light is to the eye! What a pleasing variety in it! How must that delight grow, without measure, as knowledge is increased without limit! The objects of knowledge are infinite; and by the application of the powers in their best state to these, the mind must make great and continual growing acquisitions. It is easy to see that our present state was not intended principally for the acquisition of knowledge, but of virtue. Our lives are short; our avocations and engagements about the necessary affairs of life, and the amusements, which are, in their place, not only innocent but necessary, for no one can bear a continued application of his
powers

powers even in waking hours, are manifold; and how many hours, to all the purposes of mental acquisitions, are lost in sleep? All these things shew, that this is not the state for acquiring great knowledge. Indeed, if nothing else were to prevent it, few, comparatively few, have the means and opportunities; but we are allowed to hope for a state in which the natural and generous desires after knowledge, shall be abundantly gratified; the powers of the mind surely will be then in the best estate: and such engagements of them as we find necessary in this world, and which are frequent unavoidable avocations from the pursuit of knowledge, will have no more place. The application of such powers, without such interruptions as we must submit to in this world, promiseth great things. And it is not to be imagined, that tho' there may be a difference in the measure of abilities and capacity, even in the best state; it is not to be imagined, I say, that any one among the perfect shall find reason to complain of a scanty measure; or that he finds himself in this respect unfortunate. It hath been observed by many, as a prob-

SERM. able thing, that our minds in their original frame are much alike; and that the great diversity we see in the temper, in the affections, and likewise in the measure of our abilities, may be in a great measure owing to the different complexion and constitution of our bodies: Some have argued this matter very plausibly: And if it be so; when the soul is dismissed from the body, we may hope that it will be set free from all disadvantage or misfortune with respect to the powers of the mind; and surely no man will imagine that the resurrection of the body, and the re-union of the soul to it, will bring any of these disadvantages, which are now complain'd of, along with them. We may then assuredly rest in the firm persuasion, that in the world above there shall be no complaints about the powers and abilities of the mind, more than about any thing else. And however men, who have no taste for knowledge, may put no great value upon this; yet to persons, who have a proper relish for, and that thirst after knowledge, which is so natural, it will appear a very high thing.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, It will be evident to all who attend to these matters, that we have, properly speaking, no power over our own understandings and judgments with respect to truth and falsehood; these must be determined by evidence. If a thing appeareth to the mind evidently true, it is absolutely impossible to withhold our assent. If it appeareth evidently false, we cannot possibly give our assent. This is apparent in all things which are called self-evident, and in numberless propositions, especially with respect to numbers and lines; truths of that kind no man, when they are proposed to his mind, finds it in his power to deny or even to doubt of; this is obvious. But what ought to be particularly attended to, is, that this passiveness of the understanding runs through all the degrees of evidence, down to the lowest probability. For the same reason that we find it impossible to resist the force of a self-evident truth, but must pronounce it certain, we cannot resist that evidence which appears for a probability; it must even to the mind appear probable. Thus the understanding was intended as a mirror, by which

SERM. which things were to be represented as
VII. they are; and we have in this respect no
power over it. The consequence of this
is, that in the mere assent or dissent of
the mind, as evidence appeareth to it,
there can be neither virtue nor vice; it
is really a necessary thing, in which the
mind is intirely passive. Who, for ex-
ample, thinks it virtuous in any man to
believe his own existence? Who thinks
there is virtue in assenting to demonstra-
tions in lines and numbers? And, as hath
been said, this necessity of assent or dis-
sent descendeth to the lowest probability,
so far as evidence appeareth to the mind.
But, on the other hand, it cannot be de-
nied, that men are justly accounted cul-
pable for holding some opinions, and are
to be commended for holding of others;
especially when these opinions affect the
moral state and conduct. It is in this re-
spect, we have in scripture so much ascrib-
ed to faith; and unbelief is represented
as a thing so fatal. Whence then can a-
rise the virtue of assent to truth, or the
vice and fault of not believing it, if in
mere assent or dissent, considered as such,
there is neither virtue nor vice? The an-

swer

swer to this is clear. Men may not give their assent to truth, where yet the evidence is strong and convincing, because they are negligent, and will not be at pains to enquire into it; even when it concerneth them highly. This must be accounted very blameable; and we see that inquiry into the evidences of truth is a part, and a momentous one it is, of the discipline of our present state. Several truths of great importance to us, and of which the evidence, when we have inquired into it, is strong and cogent, yet do not force themselves upon the mind, as some self-evident matters do: There is need of inquiry, and of the application of the powers to that end. And, surely, where persons reject the truth, merely because they have neglected to inquire into the evidences of it, this must be culpable in the sight of God.

Secondly, When the mind hath been perverted by vitious prejudices, and hath contracted an enmity against the truth, in this case, no apology is to be made. Here the fault is not in the understanding, properly speaking, but in the will and

SERM.
VII.

SERM. and the heart. There may be such a
 VII. degree of prejudice indeed, as rendereth
 the mind in a manner incapable of discerning and judging. Still worse is the case, when the lusts of men have made them enemies to the truth. *This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world and men have loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.* John iii. 19. And so we see, notwithstanding the passiveness of the mind in its assent or dissent, yet there may be much virtue in our believing, and much guilt in unbelief. But when men have laboured with themselves to judge impartially, and have used all reasonable diligence in inquiring into the evidence of important truth, then their sincerity will be accepted of God; and surely, those errors which are manifestly involuntary, and which are consistent with integrity of heart, shall not be imputed to them for their condemnation.

S E R M O N

SERMON VIII.

Of the Will, of Liberty, and particularly of moral Liberty.

MATTHEW XVI. 26.

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

I Proposed, by way of introduction to what is principally intended in these words of our Saviour, to consider the nature and faculties of the human soul, from which the great excellency of it will appear. In the former discourse, I endeavoured to shew that it is an immaterial substance, capable of acting, and
of

SERM. of fruition, independent of body. I like-
VIII. wife entered upon the consideration of
the faculties of it; and treated particularly concerning the understanding, and the operations of it, and concluded with some practical observations. The other great faculty is the *will*, which shall be the subject of the present discourse.

What the *will* is, needeth no explanation. Every one knows it, and the determination of the mind to act or not to act, which is signified by this familiar language, I will, or I will not. And we all know that upon this determination of the mind, or volition, our actions follow; which upon this account only, are our own actions, springing from our own choice, and volition, as the immediate cause of them. No man but perfectly knows the difference between being constrained to do a thing, which therefore is never imputed to him; and acting from will, and choice, which therefore is imputed to him. This freedom, therefore, of acting, or which is the same thing, this acting from volition, as the sole cause, is the foundation of all moral agency, of all moral good and evil, and
of

of all moral character. But here the grand S E R M.
inquiry is, is the *will* free? Or, for indeed VIII.
this is an expression scarcely proper, is
the mind free in volition? I know no
point which hath been more debated a-
mongst the learned than this: Some al-
legding strongly that there is not, nor can
be any such thing, properly and strictly
speaking, as freedom of will and choice;
that our internal sensations, upon which
this opinion, that we are properly and
strictly speaking free agents, is founded,
are all deceptions; that all the determina-
tions of our minds are in pursuance of mo-
tives operating upon the mind, which are
effectual to produce them; that therefore
the whole chain of action is linked together,
so as to render the whole necessary; and
that there is not, properly speaking, any
self-determining principle in the soul.
Others have with great earnestness con-
tended, that there is in the soul such a
self-determining principle, and that this
is the sole foundation of all moral a-
gency, of all good and evil, of all re-
ward and punishment; all which ideas
are lost, if the *will* or mind is not pro-
perly free, and the sole cause of volun-
tary action. I shall not enter into this
controversy,

SERM. controversy, upon which many volumes
VIII. have been written; and indeed very little
to the improvement of mankind. In general, if we reflect upon our voluntary deliberate actions, we shall find that there is not one of them, but what hath been done in pursuance of some motive or other, influencing and determining the mind. This is a matter of which every man may be convinced by his own reflection; and taketh place in all things, in which there is not a perfect indifferency, and which therefore cannot be of the least moment in human life. On the other hand, it is certain that nature directeth every man to ascribe to himself, all his own actions, as the immediate cause of them; and that this is the constant language of conscience, with respect to our good or our bad actions, approving and commending the one, and disapproving and condemning the other. Upon this, likewise, are all praise and blame from others, who are witnesses to our actions, founded, and all rewards and punishments. Were our actions necessary, none of these things would have any place. And so let men argue as they will, as mankind have
always

always proceeded in their judgments concerning actions, whether their own or those of others, as having been free, and the effects of volition; I say as they have proceeded upon this foundation from the beginning of time, so they will proceed to the end of it. Here we must rest; conscience will always bear the same testimony, and men will always praise and blame as they have done. And as it is manifest that any thing which can be called force is utterly inconsistent with choice, no two ideas are indeed more contradictory; so we see in things which are perfectly indifferent, and where there can be no motive for acting one way rather than another, that yet men act; this cannot but give us the idea of a self-determining principle, and prepares us to embrace the notion of freedom, as the most natural. As to the consistency of it with a perfect prescience of future events, which are the result of human free agency, and therefore cannot be supposed to be ascertained; this is a matter into which I shall not enter. It is perhaps a thing too high for the human mind, and perhaps always will be so. We know that

O

God

S E R M. God doth actually foresee such events;
 VIII. and yet we at the same time feel ourselves
 free agents. But I hasten through these
 things, as of less moment to us, that we
 may turn our thoughts to what is enter-
 taining and useful.

And First, it is by this faculty of the
 will, thus free, that a man may be said
 to have dominion over himself and his
 own actions; and a noble and honour-
 able dominion it is, very extensive, and
 in which he is absolutely independent of
 the whole creation. He is liable to no
 force, constrained he may be to do, or to
 suffer, if he will not do, what is required
 by the superior power; but over his will
 and choice, and the determinations of his
 mind there is no power of any creature.
 In this he is sole possessor and lord: and
 this maketh his own actions in such a
 manner his own, that no one else can
 have any share in them as the cause. They
 may be said to be of all things most his
 property, and of which he can in no case
 and by no enemy be deprived. And this
 self dominion is the same in all men, in
 all stations and circumstances. The very
 poorest and most obscure are equally pos-

sessors

essed of it, with the richest and most honourable. As we cannot but have the notion of something great in this, so the vast importance of it appeareth from the consequences. All praise and honour, all self applause and approbation, spring from, or may be said to be founded upon it: and these are in truth the most valuable acquisitions and enjoyments of human life. There is nothing equal to having acted well. How sweet the entertainment which an approving conscience giveth to the mind! And how absolutely independent of all created power! How great that joy in all circumstances! This is the main thing. He is a happy man who is pleased with his own actions; that is, rationally pleased, and upon the testimony of an enlightened as well as an approving conscience. And how pleasing that honour from others, which is the concomitant of substantial virtue! I may say, the reflected lustre of it; that honour from good judges among mankind, but especially from the superior orders of being; but above all from the supreme being! And how is the heart raised with the expectation of reward! Such reward

SERM. as infinite goodness and a mind infinitely

VIII. liberal, directing an hand infinitely powerful, will confer. All this is indeed riches;

and the independency of it is what I would have principally noticed. No power on earth can have any influence whatsoever upon it, to lessen or interrupt the fruition of it. We see then it was a noble possession, I may say a noble kingdom, our maker bestowed upon us when he gave us to be free agents and the voluntary subjects of his kingdom. It is very true, by so framing and endowing us, he has made our state obnoxious to great misery; the very greatest; to the painful condemnation of our consciences, to shame and infamy, and to all those grievous punishments, which the justice of God hath threatned to inflict upon the workers of iniquity. But this seemeth to be the unavoidable consequence of freedom. Whoever is capable of virtue, must also be liable to vice and evil, if he is a limited and finite creature. That we are liable to such great miscarriage, and to be made so miserable by it, is indeed the strongest of all reasons, why we should put on the firmest resolutions of doing

doing our duty, of resisting all temptations to sin, and of watching over ourselves, and our whole conduct, with the greatest exactness; but is no proof at all, that a capacity of acting from free choice and from volition, is not a very noble and excellent endowment; which unquestionably it is. Indeed there needs no more, no other proof of this, than that, without such a power, we could not have been at all capable of virtue; and what would human nature be in such a state, or how preferable to the brutes which perish? Surely, that power, which rendereth us moral agents, is our noblest distinction; and we have still reason to rejoice in it, and in that dominion in ourselves which our maker hath given us. This will appear further when it is considered, in the second place,

How precious all men account it, to be able to act according to their own choice, the dictates of their own minds, and what they themselves *will*; free from all restraint and compulsion by others! And how hardly they brook a state of servitude, in which they are not governed by their own determination, but are obliged

SERM. to submit to that of others ! When their
VIII. most rational and approvable desires and
inclinations must be thwarted, and give way to the tyrannical commands of such as have obtained power over them. As there is nothing that men of the worthiest and most generous minds esteem more than liberty ; so there is nothing they can worse bear than servitude, and a state of absolute submission to the will of their fellow creatures. Liberty seems to be the natural right, it may be called the birth right, of every man : and undoubtedly our maker, who hath endowed us with free-wills, and a power of acting from choice, intended we should be free ; and in our very frame hath declared this intention. And they who enthrall and enslave others without cause, that is, without their having done any thing by which they have forfeited their liberty, are chargeable with a most outrageous violation of the rights of humanity. But, I say, from the uneasiness and distress, which all men feel in a state of servitude, we see what a valuable thing liberty is. Civil liberty hath often been an object so dear to men, that they have counted it right, virtuous and

and honourable, to hazard life in the defence of it; and many have made a sacrifice of life rather than give it up, as counting life not worth the holding without it. Indeed, it cannot be imagined, that any truly generous and worthy mind will not be in this way of thinking. And as in the present state of human nature, there must be public civil societies, and civil constitutions; so how precious is the privilege of living under such a constitution as preserveth liberty from invasion! In which men are in this respect no ways abridged, farther than as certain branches of their liberty were given up voluntarily, in framing the constitution; and in which, those resolutions which were voluntarily formed for the good of the whole body, become the standing laws and rules of conduct. So that men, amenable to these laws, have in all other respects their full liberty, and are not obnoxious to the will of any tyrant, or to be harassed as his capricious humour, his cruelty, or his avarice shall prompt him. No possession in this world is so valuable as such liberty. And if civil liberty is a thing so valuable, what value is to be put upon re-

SERM. religious liberty, and mens being able to act,
VIII. in all matters of religion, according to
the dictates of their own consciences, and none to make them afraid ! And how injurious are they to their neighbours, who having got power into their hands, enslave them in matters of religion, and trample upon upon the unalienable rights of conscience ; forcing men to act against the dictates of it, or to suffer most grievously even to the death ! Laying men under such servitude as this, is not only a violation of the natural rights of mankind, but is an outrageous opposition to that dominion over conscience, which belongeth only to God. He alone is lord of conscience ; and as in all matters of conscience, he hath made us absolutely dependent upon himself, so by that very appointment he must have made us absolutely independent of all others. To him as our master we stand or fall, and as we are to obey his commands and do his will without reserve, so it is impossible we should be under any obligation to obey the commands of any power upon earth, in opposition to his ; and we are indispensably obliged to suffer any thing that

that can be inflicted upon us in this world, SERM. VIII.
rather than obey such commands. But

how precious must religious liberty be to a good mind ! And how pleasing to a good man that he is in a state in which he may pursue the dictates of his own conscience in peace, and with safety to his life and property ! How great the obligations all who enjoy such liberty are under to the providence of God ; and how carefully doth it become them to improve it ! How often hath it been the lot of mankind, of how many is it the dismal lot at this day, that they cannot satisfy the obligations of conscience without incurring the most grievous civil penalties, and the deepest sufferings in their persons and estates ! It is not so with us. May we be duly thankful to our maker ; and to the best ends, the great ends of religion, improve these happy days we enjoy.

But what I would most of all insist upon is, in the third place, that it was intended the *will* should be always under the conduct of reason and of conscience, and that we should choose nothing, determine nothing, do nothing but, what is agree-

SERM. agreeable to these. To do any action of
 VIII. importance, merely because one will do it,
 and for no other reason, is indeed very
 low and unworthy of human nature; and
 discovereth a most disagreeable perverseness
 of spirit, and cannot but be extremely
 hurtful. For a reasonable creature not
 to act a rational part, is most unnatural;
 and for a creature endowed with conscience,
 not to act a conscientious part, is
 impious. And as acting from meer will
 and caprice is very unnatural, so it must
 be followed with most hurtful consequences
 to a man's own interest, as well as to
 the world about him. Such self-will has
 no security against falling into the greatest
 mischiefs; whatever vain imagination,
 whatever whim takes possession, must be
 executed, however pernicious it may be.
 The truth is, there is in the thing itself
 something very ungracious to society, and
 which must render a person extremely
 unacceptable; but this is not the worst
 of it, for where reason and conscience
 have not the direction; and every thing,
 to which a person is at present inclined,
 so far as he hath power, must be done;
 his neighbours are like to suffer deeply

by

by him. If his inclinations are harmless, S E R M.
it is well ; but if they are mischievous, VIII.
they must be gratified ; and rather than
such obstinacy should be thwarted, all
must give way, and all must suffer. When
such an obstinate spirit getteth into high
station, it is what all must dread ; and we
see, in numberless instances, the world
hath suffered deeply by it. There is some-
thing perfectly shocking in that obstina-
cy which nothing can work upon, and
which, contrary to the clearest and strong-
est reason, will do things meerly because it
hath determined to do them.

But what I principally aimed at under
this head, is, to recommend that liberty
by which a person is made free from ser-
vitude to himself, as well as from servi-
tude to others ; and by which he is pre-
pared to act always in pursuance of the
dictates of cool reason and of his consci-
ence. This, for distinction sake, may be
called moral liberty ; as that which con-
sists in choosing and acting according to
choice, be it good or evil, right or wrong,
may be called natural liberty ; this, is
essential to our frame, I mean, so far as
will and choice go ; the other, is a vir-
tuous

SERM. tuous acquisition. Of the former we can-
VIII. not be deprived while we remain men;
 but many are seen to be without the latter. For explaining of this, it may be observed, that besides the superior powers of reason and conscience, it was necessary to our frame and state, that we should have many various appetites planted in us, such as hunger and thirst, and a desire of being possessed of so much of the goods of the world as will satisfy these demands; such again, are the desires of ease, and of pleasures of various kinds, and therefore of honour and distinction; and of many other things which might be named, respecting ourselves and others. Now, it is perfectly apparent, that without such particular appetites planted in us, the great ends of life would not be answered; it appeareth at the same time equally evident, that these appetites cannot answer the end, without being under direction and government; for when they are not, they are seen, in numberless instances, to be pernicious and destructive to the natural constitution, as well as to the conscience. Now, the direction they were intended to be under, is that of reason,

or

or prudence, and conscience ; which were **SERM.**
placed in our frame, as controlling pow- **VIII.**
ers, to restrain appetite, in every instance,
in which the gratification of it would be
hurtful to the constitution and general
state, or break in upon the rights of con-
science. In this respect, there is a most
remarkable difference between the hu-
man and the brute kind. In this last,
the appetites have various restraints put
upon them by nature itself, and limits,
which they discover no inclination to
transgress. But in the human kind, it is
not so ; for having reason and conscience
given them, these are to restrain desire
and inclination, where they tend to evil ;
and therefore they have not such limits
set to them by nature as the brutal or-
ders have. But now the consequence of
this is, that where reason and conscience
are not applied to regulate and restrain
them, they are apt to become exorbi-
tant ; and so not to help, but most sen-
sibly to hurt nature, and defeat the ends
of it ; which they are often seen to do.
This is the infirmity and imperfection
of our present state. And not seldom
doth desire become so strong and exor-
bitant,

SERMON. bitant, that it bids defiance to all that
 VIII. reason and conscience can offer against
 the gratification of it. Very various are
 the lusts and appetites which are planted
 in the heart of man, summed up by the
 apostle John under *the lusts of the eye,*
the lusts of the flesh, and the pride of life.
 Any of these which hath the uncontrol-
 led government of the man, must ruin
 his most valuable interests. Some per-
 sons by their natural complexion and
 constitution, or by their circumstances and
 state, are more subjected to one kind of
 them, and some to another; and some of
 them are more pernicious in their ten-
 dencies than others; but very few in-
 stances, I believe, are found, in which
 one or other doth not endanger men, and
 need very strong efforts of reason and
 of the moral powers to restrain and keep
 them under proper direction, both with
 respect to the measure and the end of them.
 Now, when any of these lusts are grown to
 such an unnatural strength, as not to ad-
 mit of direction and restraint, then indeed
 men have lost their liberty, and are en-
 slaved in the worst sense of that word.

What

What can be a more unnatural and de-
 spicable state, than for a person to see
 what is right and fit, what would be
 really for his interest and happiness, to be
 thoroughly convinced of this, and even
 have a desire to pursue it, and yet not
 have it in his power to do so; not from
 any mere natural incapacity, but that
 which is moral and contracted, an ex-
 orbitant lust having got the dominion, and
 exercising it in the most imperious and
 tyrannical manner? He sees what is right,
 he approves it, but does what is wrong.
 Conscience and reason call aloud to him
 to desist; he will not, it may be said,
 he cannot; for indeed in that state
 of his mind he cannot; and thus as
Solomon speaketh, Prov. vii. 22. He goes
as an ox to the slaughter, or as a fool to the
correction of the stocks, and knoweth not till a
dart strike through his liver; till he is un-
done and lost. In this state a person is
 a slave to himself, that is, to his own
 lusts; and this the holy scriptures call ser-
 vitude. So our Saviour saith, *John viii. 34.*
He who committeth sin is the servant of sin.
 And the Apostle *Paul speaketh, Titus iii. 3.*
of serving, or being in servitude to, divers
lusts

 SERM.
 VIII.

SERM. *lusts and pleasures.* It must be owned,

VIII.  that of all bondage this is the most unnatural and infamous ; in which a person must be a continual reproach to himself : And while he is labouring under the yoke in the hardest of all bondage, must know that this is voluntary : And thus to all his other sufferings must be added the condemnation of his own heart. Look into any kind of bondage to which the body can be subjected, to labouring in the mines, or at the oar, through the whole of an unfortunate life ; yet while the soul is free, the man may be said to be free ; and to be capable of most generous sentiments, and of some enjoyment of being : But when the very soul is enslaved, there cannot be said to be the least shadow of liberty ; the noblest sentiments must be banished, and all the tendencies of the soul towards the highest dignity of nature thwarted and suppressed. And it is known, that the longer such tyranny prevails in the mind, it becometh not only more rigorous in its exactions, but more confirmed and established ; the chains grow stronger and stronger, so that all prospect of liberty is lost. But how miserable

terable the case when men are; contrary to reason and conscience, dragged into Actions, which not only they see must ruin their state hereafter, which is indeed a prospect more distant, but even when they see the present unavoidable hurt and ruin of their state in this world; see it and confess it, but appear incapable of avoiding the rock on which their vices drive them, and on which they are to be dashed to pieces. If any thing could be more miserable and more infamous, it is, when the tyranny of desire and inclination continueth, even when men have out-lived all the capacities, or are cut off from all opportunity of gratification; human nature cannot appear in any other light equally opprobrious. But the very mention of this is enough.

O! How blessed on the other hand, is moral liberty! When nature is in a proper state, when there is that subornation of the lower affections, and appetites, in which the beauty of it consisteth, and upon which the tranquillity of it dependeth; in which, reason and conscience have the government of the man; in

P

which

SERM. which, these are always consulted and
 VIII. their dictates submitted to; in which,
 passions, standing in opposition to them,
 are resolutely suppressed and quelled;
 in which, as the Apostle speaketh, there
 is no *conferring with flesh and blood!* Here
 no desire is to be gratified, till it hath
 justified itself at the bar of reason, and
 approved itself to conscience; no matter
 how earnest it may be, it must yield, and
 submit to the dictates of the superior
 powers; the dignity of the man is as-
 serted in opposition to it, and layeth
 on an effectual restraint: And in all con-
 flicts between the flesh and the spirit,
 the latter is victorious. What tran-
 quillity and blessed peace must reign in
 the soul so regulated and attempered!
 What joy doth conscience minister, when
 it hath thus the uncontrollable do-
 minion; and in what safe paths will
 it lead men! How comfortable the re-
 flections upon such a state and con-
 duct! How elevating the hopes it giv-
 eth! How open and frank the coun-
 tenance, how undaunted doth it ren-
 der the spirit? Let us put all the grati-
 fications which the objects of vicious de-
 fire

Of the Will.

211

SERM.
VIII.

fire can give, let us put them all together, and in comparison of this they are nothing. And it is carefully to be attended to here, that when the various desires are kept under proper discipline, they by degrees cease to be impetuous and exorbitant. Habitual indulgence doth greatly strengthen them, and it is by accustomed gratification that they become most ungovernable; but by abstinence and discipline they are greatly weakened, and made amenable to those laws which nature hath prescribed. So that as the power of conscience is strengthened, at the same time it's work, or, if you please, it's task, is the easier; for besides the natural tendency of this discipline to strengthen the one, and weaken the other; there is a taste begotten and confirmed for the noblest sort of gratifications, namely, for those pleasures which are annexed to the practice of religion and virtue; and where that taste has once obtained in its proper strength and delicacy, the difficulty is in a great measure over: Then inclination will be brought over to the

P 2

party

SERM. party of conscience ; and when men
 VIII. have once got possession of a good, which
 not only reason, but their own sensations
 pronounce to be greater than any sinful
 gratification, they will not easily part
 with it, for the sake of any other.
 This is a state truly honourable and
 truly happy; and what we ought ever
 to think of and aspire after, as the most
 excellent acquisition of which human na-
 ture is in this state capable. Should we
 labour all our days for it, with as great
 eagerness and severity to ourselves, as
 ever any creature laboured to acquire
 a fortune, or to satisfy his ambitious
 desires, we should find the acquisition
 a glorious reward; but this is not the
 case. It is far more easily attainable;
 and there wanteth but inclination and
 resolution to ensure it. The natural ca-
 pacity is given to every man, and the
 additional aid which is necessary, will
 never be wanting to those who sincere-
 ly seek it.

Upon the whole, as creatures endow-
 ed with moral powers, and with liberty,
 we are capable of attaining to very great
 happiness.

Of the Will.

213

happiness, or of sinking into a very **SERM.**
low state of misery. This constitution **VIII.**
we cannot alter, it would be impious
to desire it. But we may by the grace
of God so improve it, as to have eter-
nal glory and happiness entailed upon
us.

P 3 **S E R M O N**

SERMON IX.

Of the Affections, their nature, arrangement in the heart, and operations as springs of action.

MATTHEW XVI. 26.

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

HAVING proposed to discourse upon the powers and faculties of the human soul, with a view of shewing the worth and excellency of it; and having treated of the understanding and the will, and made several

veral reflections upon them of a practical tendency ; on the present occasion, I proceed to consider the affections ; which may indeed be called the salt of life, which without them would be joyless and insipid. I shall therefore consider the nature of the affections, the arrangement of them in the heart, and the operations of them as springs of action, and of enjoyment : And in prosecuting this subject, there will be occasion of mentioning many things which shew the wisdom and goodness of our Maker, and that the frame of the human mind is indeed curious and excellent. These things I shall endeavour to lay before you, in so plain a manner, that every one who giveth any attention to what passeth in his own mind, may easily comprehend them.

What an affection or passion is, is to be known by feeling, rather than by definition. All know what desire and aversion, what joy and grief, what fear and anger are. All know the manner in which these passions affect the mind, and the various tendencies of them ; and likewise that variety in the measure and degree of strength with which they operate.

SERM. rate. Sometimes, and in some constitutions, they appear to be so strong and inflamed, as to fill the mind with tumult and confusion; at other times they operate with greater calmness, yet with sufficient strength to answer the purposes of them, without causing any painful perturbation in the mind. To prevent such perturbation, is the province of wisdom; but not to root out the passions, which is a thing that cannot be done, nor is it our duty to attempt it. The philosophy which pretended to this, and that the wise or perfect man, was to be void of passions, was indeed very absurd: But it is probable, the language used by it, might be in some instances mistaken, and that those celebrated teachers of the gentile world meant no more, than that the wise man was to be free from all internal tumult by passion, from all distressing and painful sensations, in a word from all exorbitancy. However, what remains to be said farther concerning the nature and energy of the passions, will naturally occur, as we come to speak more particularly concerning them.

I proceed now to consider the arrange-
ment of the affections. The principal di-
stinction, which maketh two great classes
of them, is, into those, of which our
own private and personal good is the ob-
ject, and those, that have for their object
and ultimate end, the good and happiness
of others; in other words, they may be
all classed under self-love, and good-will.
Some, indeed, seem to question, whether
they may not all be reduced to self-love,
working in its various ways, and for its
various purposes; and whether there be
any such thing as disinterested good-
will or benevolence, the ultimate end of
which, and that in which the affection
resteth, is, the good and happiness of o-
thers. But this is indeed to ask, whe-
ther there be any such thing as good
will at all; as to speak of interested good-
will, is a plain contradiction in terms;
for so far as we mean our own personal
interest in an action, so far we cannot
mean that of our neighbour; and so
far as we intend the interest and happi-
ness of our neighbour, we cannot in-
tend that of our own. Here the principles
and the ends of action are intirely distinct.

Now,

SERM.

IX.

SERM. Now, whether there be real good will in

IX. the heart, one should think should be a matter of feeling; and that to this the appeal should be made. If any person shall say that he has not now, and that he is not conscious to himself that he ever had, any desire of the happiness of others, or any kind wishes towards them; I know nothing which is to be said to him upon the argument; it would be hard to prove to a man that he hath an affection in his soul, which he himself never felt there, and of which he has no consciousness. But if there is really such a character in the world, how must it appear? Who would like to assume it, or who would wish to be known by it? I shall, therefore, take it for granted, that there is such a thing as disinterested good will to be found in the heart of man. The truth is, there are many of our actions, to which we are excited by a combination of very different affections. Sometimes, indeed it is very often the case, that in doing good to others, we promote our own interest; nay, from the assurance of a future reward, it may be said that we always do: So that we may be prompted to do a good

and

and kind action to others, from regard SERM.
to ourselves, as well as good will to them. **IX.**

A regard to honour, and name, and reputation, may co-operate in such actions, sometimes almost imperceptibly to ourselves; and in some instances, hypocrites pretend to act with good will to others, when they mean their own private interest, and that only: Such was the case of the Pharisees, who did their alms in the most showy manner, and that they might be seen of men. But from these instances we must not conclude, that there is no such thing as disinterested good will in the human heart. We are therefore to consider the various passions and affections which are planted in the heart, as classed under two heads, namely, self love, and good will; or the love of ourselves, and the love of others.

Those which are arranged under the head of self-love, and that minister to it, are either such as immediately and directly tend to our preservation or defence from evil, or to procure good and happiness. For example, fear, and anger, are intended, the one, to make us avoid danger, and the other, to restrain such as
are

SERM. are disposed to injure us, from an apprehension of suffering by our anger and resentment; and to prompt the immediate exertion of our power in our own defence.

IX.

Others tend directly to procure good and happiness, such as the appetites of hunger and thirst, which are planted in animal nature, common to us with the brutal orders; and such are those desires which may be more properly called human, as the desire of pleasure, the desire of knowledge, of riches, and of honour. I hope you will bear with what may seem to some less fit to be the subject of such a discourse, 'till I point out particularly how these affections are arranged in the heart, and what place our Maker intended each of them should hold; for in this order there is wondrous contrivance, and wondrous beauty; and the more we attend to it, the more we shall be prepared to adore and celebrate our Maker.

There is, in the mind, a calm and deliberate regard to our own good and happiness, to which all the particular passions of the selfish kind, were intended to be subjected, and by which they were

to be controled; a regard, which hath less of passion in it, and which is calm and fixed, and invariably pursueth a persons own happiness as the general ultimate end. This affection, I say, hath a controlling and governing power, both over the passions which are intended as preservatives from evil, and over those, the direct tendency of which is to procure good. For example, fear prompteth a person to avoid danger; but when, upon deliberate attention to his own interest and good, he sees it necessary to this end, that he should encounter danger, then the voice of fear is no more to be regarded. In the same manner, when anger prompteth a man to exert his power in the retaliation of a real or apprehended injury or affront; if his deliberate thoughts convince him that doing so will be prejudicial to his true interest, a regard to that will restrain his anger; and he will not give way to the tumultuous efforts of it. This holds true likewise with regard to all those particular passions, the tendency of which is to procure good and happiness; these are all to be subjected to, and controled by, the

SERMON the general and less passionate regard to
 IX. our true interest. So, hunger and thirst,
 and a desire of certain kinds of food or
 drink, may be very strong, but if men
 see that the gratifying these appetites
 would be really hurtful to their health,
 a prudent and discreet regard to their
 own happiness, will control them. Thus,
 what more generous and commendable
 than a desire of attaining to knowledge;
 but if the labour necessary to this ac-
 quisition should threaten the constitution,
 or be inconsistent with other things ne-
 cessary for the good and happiness of the
 man, a calm attention to this, is to re-
 strain that desire however impetuous. Just
 so, a desire of honour, of power, or of
 riches; if any of these, in the ardors and
 vehemencies of them, should prompt to
 measures which are of hurtful tendency,
 and to actions by which the general state
 might deeply suffer; the care of that
 must forbid pursuing what is thus hurt-
 ful, and lay prudent restraints upon these
 desires. And so it is with respect to all
 those inclinations and passions which
 were intended to minister to self-love,
 and to the calm attention and regard
 to

to personal interest ; these must be all SERM.
 subjected to this, and always will be so in IX.
 well disciplined minds. Our blessed Lord
 hath given us an instance of this in the
 passage where my text is, which is very
 remarkable, and will fully illustrate what
 I mean. What can be a stronger desire
 in man than the love of life, of which
 all men are conscious ? Yet, in some
 cases, it may be greatly to a mans loss to
 preserve life, and greatly to his advantage
 to give it up. *If any man will come after
 me, let him deny himself, and take up his
 cross, and follow me. For whosoever will
 save his life shall lose it, and whosoever will
 lose his life for my sake shall find it.* And he
 elsewhere tells his disciples, *Luke xiv. 26.*
*That if they hated not their own lives, as
 well as father and mother, and wife and
 children, that is, be willing to give them
 up in his cause, they could not be his dis-
 ciples.* The meaning is, that they had
 concernments to attend to, and take care
 of, that were of greater moment than
 mortal life ; and that a prudent regard to
 true interest, that which is of eternal
 consequence, would determine them to
 give it up ; in other words, self-love would
 so

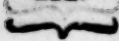
SERM. so determine them, for by this they should

IX. be infinite gainers.

But then farther, as all the particular passions and affections of the selfish and private kind, were intended to be subjected to, and controled by a calm prudential regard to our own interest and well being in general; so we shall observe, if we attend to it, that of those affections which were to be so subjected, some hold a higher place and station in the human frame than others, and have accordingly a controlling power over those that are beneath them. What I mean will clearly appear by giving a few instances. The desire of ease and sensual pleasure, is perhaps the very lowest in our nature; now, this is not only subjected to, and to be controled by the supreme private affection, that is, calm self-love, and deliberate attention to our own interest; but is under the control likewise of others. If an appetite for pleasure should be so indulged as to spoil the taste for the acquisition of knowledge, or of wealth, so far as that is necessary for a person's comfortable subsistence; in a right constituted mind it must give way to these

these last mentioned desires, which are SERM.
higher or more important: Much more IX.
must it give way, if a just regard to the
preserving of health forbiddeth the gra-
tification of it. Thus also, the desire of
acquiring wealth, if it prompts to what
would be injurious to health, or to re-
putation and credit, the desire of these,
which are stronger in well disciplined
mind, must control it. In this manner,
as the passions hold an higher place in
our frame, in a right state of the mind,
they have proportionable influence and
power of controlling those which are be-
neath them: And so it cometh to pass,
that over the lower passions, which are
always the most impetuous, there is a va-
riety of restraining and controlling powers.
It is also very observable, that those pas-
sions which have the greatest impetuosity
and warmth, as incentives to action, yet
in a right constituted mind, have not such
power as affections which are much
calmer, and raise no such tumult in the
soul. The desire of the higher mental
acquisitions raises no such tumult, nor
shews such ardor and impetuosity, as the
desire of sensual pleasure; yet it is found

SERM. to have more power, and to govern and

IX.  restrain the other. The desire of enjoying peace and living in friendship with our neighbours, has no such sensible emotion in it as anger and resentment; yet it is seen to prevail over anger, and to be able to curb it. In general, as the lowest, which are like to be the most impetuous passions, and the warmest incentives to action, were intended to be under the influence and government of those which are calmer, but in an higher station; so it is evident these last are more prevalent, and as they have more calmness, so they have more influence in directing the conduct.

All that I have been now saying seems to be just, with respect to our original frame, and our Makers intention in its contrivance; and will be found to be fact in well disciplined minds. But it is well known, that in some instances, and characters, certain passions, whether it is owing to an unfortunate cast in the original complexion, or to habit and long unrestrained indulgence, grow to such an exorbitancy, as to defy all restraint, and to govern the man intirely. Surely, however,

ever, this, which is the perversion and corruption of it, ought not to be called SERM.
IX.

nature; it is indeed a thing quite unnatural. Where nature is in its right state, nothing can be more beautiful than the arrangement of the affections in it, from the highest to the lowest: Never had the commander of a body of men in the field his officers and soldiers in better order; and in this order the harmony and beauty of human nature doth indeed consist. When the influence of the several affections is proportioned to the station and place they severally hold in our frame, the whole composition appeareth most beautiful, and the purposes of life are peacefully and effectually served.

The other class or order of the affections, are those of which the good and happiness of our neighbour is the object; and in which the affection resteth, as its ultimate end. In this sense, a good man may be said to love his neighbour as himself. Self-love we know pursues after private happiness as the end in which it resteth; and sincere love to our neighbours doth likewise rest in their good, as its ultimate end; not proposing to do

SERM. good to them as a means of answering
IX. some private purpose, but really intending to serve them and their interest. To set this subject in the clearest light I can,

It must be observed, in the first place, that God has planted in the heart a calm disposition to do good, as we have opportunity, to all who are capable of receiving benefits or good from us; and hath annexed to this a most pleasing satisfaction. Man was formed for doing good to man, and indeed to all creatures endowed with life and sense, and to delight in it; and surely that mind must be wretchedly depraved, that can take pleasure in doing evil. We cannot but find that a disposition to do good, and our pursuing the tendencies of it, is always the object of our approbation; and doing evil is what we cannot but condemn. To do evil merely for the sake of doing evil, were such a thing really to be found, is the most unnatural thing imaginable, and setteth the agent in the worst and the most hateful light. Now, to this calm general disposition to do good, a great many affections which minister to it, are subordinate;

subordinate; such are the love of our S E R M.
country, the love of a neighbourhood, IX.
the love of a family, and of our relations,
the affection of parents to children, and
of children to parents, the love of inti-
mate and dear friends; such are likewise
the affections which are suited to the va-
rious circumstances in which our neigh-
bour is found; sympathy with the afflict-
ed and unhappy, and joy in the happiness
of the prosperous; and such likewise are
the dispositions and determinations of the
mind to the practice of those particular
virtues, which tend to the good of our
neighbour; as the love and practice of
justice, the love of truth, gratitude, ge-
nerosity in almsgiving, and such things as
these; which are virtues that minister to
the good of others, and if they had not
that tendency, would have had no exis-
tence: The design of planting them in
the heart, is evidently to be as so many
land-marks to us, and to direct us into
that conduct which will most assuredly
tend to the good of our neighbour, and
to produce peace and happiness in the
world. This is a very general view of
the good affections, and of the subordi-
nation

SERMON. nation of the particular ones, and whose

IX. object is more confined, to the calm and dispassionate disposition to do good; which may be said to be supreme in this order; And this subordination will be apparent to every one from our most familiar way of thinking and speaking upon this subject. Ask a person why he should follow truth, and do justice; and he will immediately tell you, that without truth and justice the world could not stand, nor society subsist; and that there could be nothing upon earth but misery, the person of the strongest arm doing whatsoever he would. Ask why parents should love their children and take care of them, why children should honour and obey their parents; he will immediately answer, because of the ruinous effects and consequences which must ensue, if these affections did not prevail in the world. Not only is he sensible of a beauty and decency in them, but is capable of discerning why they are made to appear so beautiful and decent; namely, because they are fruitful of so much happiness to the world. Which shews that they are all intended to minister to the great principle of goodness or good-

good-will, and consequently, as will afterwards appear, must be controled by it. S E R M.
IX.

In the next place, it is evident, that that disposition, which God hath originally planted in the heart, to do good, as such, must always embrace the greatest good, that can be done: This admitteth no doubt. If men do good from a love of doing good, they will be sure to do the greatest good they can; and not to do the good which men have the capacity and opportunity of doing, shews a defect in the principle; that person cannot be under the power and direction of it, who doth not the best which is in his power. The consequence of this must be, that where two designs, both good, interfere, so that both of them cannot be prosecuted, the lesser good must always give way to the greater, and the more confined, to that which is more extended; and in pursuing this measure, our hearts will always improve us.

But, in the next place, there is, in the original regulation of our affections, a very pleasing instance of the wisdom of our

SERMON. our maker, in that they are found to be
IX. warmest and most ardent, where we have
 the greatest opportunity of doing good. For instance, towards those who are joined to us in the relations of domestic life, or in tender and intimate friendships, or in near and familiar neighbourhoods; here we can be very significantly useful and serviceable; while we can do little but wish well to persons who are at a great distance from us, and thereby in a manner quite out of the reach of our influence. Did the affections work with the same energy towards persons at a great distance from us, that they do towards intimate friends and dear relations, this would not only answer no end, but it would really make men very unhappy. Suppose, for instance, they were to be affected by the misfortunes, or sickness, or death, of absolute strangers, in the same manner that they are by those of their near relations, who are perhaps the desire of their eyes and the joy of their hearts, their state must be very painful and miserable indeed. Or supposing the affections were as strong incentives to action, where there was no opportunity

or

or capacity of doing good, as where there S E R M.
are both, this would be very inconvenient, and could be of no use. But so we IX.
see it is ordered, that the ardor of the affection is proportioned to the capacity and opportunity of pursuing the tendencies and purposes of it.

But then those affections which are the most ardent, as incentives to action, the objects of which are nearest to us, and which lie within the narrowest circle, yet, notwithstanding their ardor, were not intended to be so powerful, as those which are more calm, and have a more extended object. Love, for example, to our country, is a much more powerful, because a more highly approved principle of action, than love to near relations; and the present interest of the latter is to be neglected, when it is inconsistent with our satisfying the demands of the other; and so in a thousand other cases, the most ardent affection of the private kind was intended to give way to a more public good. Thus, however strong the love of our country may be in a generous and well disposed person, yet if he, which can indeed but very seldom happen, discerneth

SERMON. eth that something is in his power, by

IX. which the human race may receive great advantage, though, in some respects, prejudicial to his country, goodness will determine him to do the greatest and most extensive good. And thus, in all cases, the affections in a well disposed mind will govern as principles of and incentives to action, not in proportion to the ardor of the feeling, but in proportion to the greatness and extensiveness of the object.

It is but the same thing in other words, to say, that the supreme calm, and dispassionate goodness was intended in our frame to be a controlling and governing principle, to which all the lower social affections were to be subordinate. So, for instance, sympathy with a criminal might very strongly incline his tender hearted judge to pardon him; but if he sees that this will be an injury to the public, his regard to that, tho' more cool and dispassionate, must over-rule his pity; and tho' with a faltering accent, and with tears in his eyes, he pronounces the sentence; yet a just regard to the public, though calmer, and producing no such agitation, obligeth him to pronounce it.

One

One child of a family shall be perhaps SERM.
the object of peculiar affection to a pa- IX.
rent, and it may be without any substan-
tial reason; but a regard to the family
in general, in a discreet parent, will check
and control that passionate affection, and
prevent its hurtful tendencies. And so,
in numberless obvious instances, the su-
perior though calmer affections, were in-
tended to control the others; and tho'
the former are less passionate, yet they
are found to be more powerful; the one
supreme principle or determination to do
the greatest good, though the calmest and
most dispassionate, is superior to all, and
is seen, in a well disposed mind, to break
through all opposition given by the infe-
rior affections of the same class.

Thus I have given you a very general
view of the natural arrangement of the
affections which are planted in the heart.
A calm deliberate regard to our true per-
sonal interest, having in its train all the
particular private affections that either
tend to preserve and defend us from evil,
or to procure us good and happiness;
and, on the other hand, a calm dispassio-
nate regard to the good of others, having
in

SERM. in its train the particular social affections,

IX. which are all subordinate to it, and intended to be controled by it. Such are the love of our country, of our family, of our intimate friends; sympathy with the afflicted, and all such affections, which were evidently intended to minister to the purposes of the general calm and dispassionate good will. Thus the affections are placed in the heart of a man; and you see how kind our maker hath been in forming us in this manner. There is here an arrangement of the various principles of action, which is indeed beautiful and lovely; upon which, the more we reflect, the more we shall be pleased with it. And indeed, my principal view in giving you this detail of the powers of the mind, and of the principles of action, is to lead you into an admiration of our maker's wisdom and goodness. These appear wonderful in the structure of our bodies, and the several parts and members of them, and have been by many writers highly celebrated; but surely they are not less displayed in the frame and constitution of our minds, which is admirable; and appears, in a well disciplined mind,

with

with great beauty. But without such SERM.
discipline, and without maintaining order IX.
in them, and the necessary government,
all becometh confusion and misery; and
the finest composition and noblest structure,
appeareth as a deformed ruin. Very
justly hath Solomon observed, Prov.
xxv. 28 that *he who hath no rule over
his own spirit, is like a city broken down and
without walls*; a defenceless and deformed
ruin, in which it is affliction and distress
to make our abode. This is above
all things to be attended to; there is not
one affection or desire which God hath
planted in the heart of man but what
is in itself good, and contributeth to the
perfection of our frame, and indeed was
necessary in our present state; but whatever
affection is not under government,
and becometh irregular and exorbitant,
cannot fail of producing mischief. This
holdeth true, even with respect to those
affections of the social kind, which seem
to be the most lovely, and to promise the
greatest happiness, as the natural fruit of
them: for example, tenderness of sympathy,
generosity, activity in serving others,

SERM.thers, faithfulness to their interests, and

IX. such affections, so lovely and beautiful, and so fruitful of good, yet when they are not under the direction of sound sense and of conscience, they never fail of producing most mischievous effects.

SERMON

SERMON X.

Of Reason and Conscience, their power over the affections, and particularly of the authority of Conscience in directing the conduct.

MATTHEW XVI. 26.

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own Soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his Soul?

IN treating of the powers and faculties of the human soul, with a view of shewing the original excellency of it, I have distinctly considered the understanding, the will and the affections.
These

SERM. These last were the subject of the preceding discourse, in which the nature of them was considered; the distinction of them into two classes; namely, such as had the good of the individual for their object, and such as pointed to the good of others, as their ultimate end. The former, arranged under a calm and deliberate desire of our own happiness, which hath a controlling power over all the particular appetites and desires of the selfish kind. The other, under a calm good will or cordial disposition to promote the good of others, which was plainly intended to have the government of all the particular social affections and passions. But I observed, that besides this subordination of the affections, among themselves, they were intended to be under the government of reason and conscience; and this is what I shall, as shortly and clearly as I can, explain in the present discourse.

And first, let us consider the power and influence of reason over the affections. I speak of reason, now, in the strict sense of that word, as signifying that faculty, by which, having received the ideas of objects,

objects, we compare these ideas together, SERM.
X.
and judge concerning the agreement or disagreement of them, or concerning truth and falsehood; and by which we can from principles evidently true, deduce consequences by a great variety of steps, to the discovering of truths, that were not otherwise to be found out, greatly to the increase of our knowledge; that faculty in fine, by which our knowledge is applied to practice, and by which we are taught to use proper means for serving the various ends we have in view. This is what we call reason and understanding. Now, with respect to its power over the affections, it may be observed, in the first place, that reason cannot produce any affection in the heart, but is only to direct and regulate the affections it finds there. The affections are all originally planted in us by our maker. And if we were supposed to be without them in our original frame, no reasoning nor reflection could beget them; of which there needeth no other proof than this, that if they had not been planted in us by our maker, we could not have had any idea of them at all, to reflect upon, or to be the
R subject

SERM. subject of our reasoning ; no more than
 X. one born blind could have the idea of
 light and colours, or one born deaf of
 sounds or music.

Secondly, Reason cannot point out to us an ultimate end. This is the business of the affections or heart. Reason directeth us to subordinate ends, which are the means of answering other ends, but the end which is ultimate, or which is the same thing, in which the mind rests as what is desired for itself, without reference to any thing farther, reason does not point out. This will be very plain to every one who attends to what passes in his own mind with respect to the pursuit of both private and public happiness, and likewise with respect to what is right. Ask a person why he should labour for food and raiment, or any other valued acquisition ; and immediately he will tell you, the reason is, that he may render life easy and pleasant to himself, and avoid evil and pain. Ask him why he should avoid pain, and seek after pleasure ; why, the plain reason is, that the one is good and the other evil : but why should he seek to avoid evil and procure good ?

good? Here no reason is to be given, SERM.
but that the one is evil and the other X.
good, which plainly referreth us, not to
mere reason, but to a sense by which
good and evil are discerned, and to an
affection of the heart. Ask, again, with
respect to good will, why a person should
give alms to the poor? the reason is, that
it will relieve the poor from painful and
pinching necessity, from hunger or cold:
but why should the poor man be relieved
from this necessity? The reason is, it is
doing him good: but why should we do
him good? Here, without recurring to an
ultimate feeling, no reason is to be given;
but what must be taken from our own
interest, either as our doing good to our
neighbour will tend to promote our pre-
sent interest, or that we expect a reward
from our maker; which is a reason that
will be given very readily by many who
think our own interest is all in all; but
then it brings us back just where we were
before; and when it is asked why we
should promote our own interest, or pro-
cure good to ourselves; the only answer
is, that it is good; no other reason can
be given. It is just the same thing with
R 2 our

SERMON. doing that which is right. What the

X. mind rests in, and beyond which it cannot go, is, that it is right; which refers us plainly to a faculty by which right and wrong are discerned, and which is a power quite distinct from reason.

Thirdly, It is the province of reason to minister to the affections, in directing to, and finding out means to serve those particulars ends, towards which the affections point. This is the business of understanding or wisdom.

Fourthly, Reason hath a very material influence upon the affections, in finding out and correcting the irregularities of them. For instance, if the desire of pleasure, or the desire of gain, be vehement and exorbitant in the mind, so that objects more excellent are neglected; cool impartial reason upon comparison of these objects, will quickly discern the irregularity there must be in the vehemency with which the less excellent objects are pursued, and will direct the restraining of it within proper bounds. Again, if a subordinate end is pursued, so as to neglect the ultimate end it was intended to serve; reason is to observe this great

great error in the state of the heart, and to correct it. Nay, sometimes passions are so strong, and desire so vehement, as to defeat their own immediate purpose; thus, the love of pleasure often pursueth its object with such eagerness, as to produce pain and misery instead of delight. Fear shall often prevail to such a degree, that instead of applying the powers instantly for preservation and defence, it shall debilitate them so, as to make them utterly incapable of any application. All these irregularities are to be observed and corrected by reason: and all must know by experience, what influence cool reflection and reasoning hath in these cases. Thus, anger and wrath, and indeed all the passions, were intended to be kept within proper bounds. And as the more exorbitant passions are to be restrained by the power of reason, so those which are become too feeble and weak to answer the end of them in our frame, are to be strengthened, and the influence of reason and thinking may be very considerable this way. For though reason cannot create a passion, yet it may strengthen it greatly, by setting the object in a proper light;

SERM. by fixing the attention of the mind to it;
X. and by restraining and suppressing any antagonist passion, by which it is opposed and born down. And it is because of the influence which in this manner we may have upon the affections, that the exercise of them becometh the subject of command, and becometh our duty. For the meaning of this is not, that we can by an act of our will, and at our own pleasure, excite an affection in our souls, as we can move our hands or our feet: But the meaning is, that we should do what is in our power to suppress and curb all passions which are set in opposition to those which we are called to exercise, and use our best endeavours to encourage these last; when we have done this, we have done what is properly required of us as our duty; and we shall find it will not be without success.

This leads to something that it may be very proper to consider here. In the holy scriptures we are assured, that for our works of good will and charity we shall be rewarded, and by the service we do to others, shall be great gainers ourselves at the last. Now, this seemeth to take off the intention from doing good, for the sake

of our neighbour, and making him happy, and to lay the principal stress upon the promoting of our own interest, and so to marr instead of helping the exercise of real good will. But this difficulty immediately vanisheth, when it is considered, that where this real good will is not found, there is no reward to be expected. For if the principle is not in the heart, the promise of reward to the actions which ought to proceed from that principle, gives no title to it. But where the principle is found, we are in the right to encourage it by all proper considerations. Thus, for instance, when a man's mind suggesteth to him a good action which is in his power; but which might involve him in difficulty and prove a present loss, whereby he is tempted to drop the thoughts of it; why, when he sets himself down to consider, whether he shall pursue the tendencies of his good affection, or oppose them and quell it; he may easily see, that if he does pursue these tendencies in doing good, it will be no final loss to him; for that his present loss shall be compensated; and that, therefore, there is reason to encourage the good affection, and to do the kind office to his neighbour upon which it puts him. Thus the force

SERM. of the antagonist selfish affection is taken
X. off, and he is encouraged to go on in
well-doing. In like manner, all the motives to do a good action, taken from honour and reputation, nay, from the present pleasure it yieldeth, all the motives, I say, may operate, not for suppressing the good affection, but as reasons for encouraging and strengthening it. And you see this is plainly what the author of nature, who has furnished us with these motives, intended. In a word, we are not out of nature in using all the means we can in encouraging goodness; and our doing so, is very consistent with the exercise of the purest and most disinterested good will; something of this there must be in the heart, or else there is indeed nothing to be rewarded. But of this subject there will be an opportunity of speaking farther afterwards.

Lastly, It is the province of reason to deliver the mind from prejudices, and the false colours cast upon objects, by which the judgment and the affections are often led sadly astray; of which, all who attend to themselves must have a painful experience. Why are we found a-

verse

verse to what reason and nature pronounce excellent and lovely, but that these things appear to us in a false light? Why else do we take pleasure in any thing base, deformed and hateful? Why is good put for evil and evil for good? Why shall men do very bad things and take pleasure in them, when in doing them they imagine they do God good service? The judgment and the spiritual senses are often so perverted, that as our Saviour hath very strongly, but very justly expressed it, *the light* which is in men, becometh *darkness*; and if so, *how great is that darkness*? Now, these prejudices are sometimes the effect of *evil lusts warring in the heart*; which have a most unhappy influence upon the judgment and the spiritual senses. They do indeed, especially, *the lusts of the flesh*, war against the soul. Sometimes they are the effect of education, and of errors which men have imbibed in their infancy, and which it is extremely difficult to banish from the mind; principally in matters of religion; perhaps nothing more difficult. Sometimes they are the fruit of mere habit and custom; or the fruit of fashion, which men find it difficult to resist. What an
inexpressible.

SERM. inexpressible influence have these prejudices upon our affections, upon our joys and our sorrows, our loves and our aversions, our fears and our hopes? But from whatever cause they arise, it is the province of reason to remove them. To search after truth and nature; to examine the workings of imagination, and all the associations of our ideas; to call every suggestion, which ariseth in the mind, and every fancy, to the bar; and examine them by the unquestionable principles of reason, that nothing may be indulged and encouraged but what is according to nature and truth; and that all phantastical combinations of ideas may be rejected; no matter how they prevail in the world about us; no matter how they have been entertained by ourselves; if they are unjust, and upon deliberate inquiry they are found to be so, they are to be rejected. And though we are apt to complain of the weakness of our minds, and that very justly; yet we have more reason to complain of our indolence and want of application. It is inconceivable what effects a careful and impartial inquiry will produce. Amazing the effects

fects it hath produced. And we must SERM.
every one of us, be sensible of the in- X.
fluence which thinking closely, and com-
muning with our own hearts, and con-
versation with others, assisting these, hath
upon the affections. How aversion a-
gainst certain objects hath been removed,
or changed into the love of them; how
fear hath been banished and given way
to fortitude of spirit; how evil lusts have
yielded the place to purity of sentiments,
and to dispositions which are good and
holy; and though this kind of discipline
will not produce equal effects in all, yet,
where it is in good earnest applied, it will
produce some good effects; and make men
better than they were, though perhaps,
not what they ought to be. Thus I have
given you a view of the great use of rea-
son and understanding with respect to
the affections. And I hope nothing hath
been said but what the attentive and
thinking will apprehend, and discern to
be just.

The other great governing power is
that of conscience, of which I shall treat
more largely and particularly. Conscience
was plainly intended to be supreme
in

SERM. in our frame ; and you will easily observe, that it is a power or faculty distinct from any which hath been yet considered. We might conceive all the affections I have been treating of combined together ; we might conceive reason superadded ; and yet all this without a sense of moral good and evil, of moral excellency and deformity. This casteth a colour upon objects, if I may use the expression, which is peculiar. Indeed, like all other simple ideas, it doth not admit of definition ; but appears to be as uniform amongst mankind, as the senses of smelling or tasting, or any other, I may say more so. As we know how tastes or smells are offensive or inoffensive by our senses of smelling or tasting, so by the sense of right or wrong, of excellent and vile, in affections and actions, some of them appear beautiful and becoming, of which we feel a most pleasing approbation ; others hateful, vile, and abominable, and which our reflecting thoughts condemn as such, and cannot but condemn. Now, the power of the mind in directing our conduct according to this spiritual sense, which is indeed the law of
our

our nature, and of approving or condemn-
ing our past actions, as they have been
agreeable or disagreeable to it, we call
conscience. A power which is plainly pe-
culiar to mankind, amongst all the orders
of life which we meet with in this world.
For none of the brutal kinds discover any
thing of it, or of that sense of moral good
or evil.

Every man must be sensible that he is
affected in quite another manner by the
sentence passed by this power, than by
any thing else. We blame ourselves when
we have committed errors in point of
prudence, or in point of common de-
cency, and the various forms of it; but
we feel and suffer in quite another man-
ner, when we have done a thing wrong
and wicked, and have contracted any mor-
al stain, by a transgression of this law
of our nature. On the other hand, no-
thing giveth us so great pleasure as hav-
ing acted according to it; it is pleasure
of a peculiar kind, and by a well-dis-
posed mind will be preferred to all other
joys.

It seems to be evident, that in this sense
of right and wrong, moral obligation is
founded,

SERM. founded, and that from this it taketh its
 X. rise; for it appears to be impossible to
 separate a sense of obligation from a sense
 of right. Surely the most obvious and
 natural reason in the world for doing any
 thing is, because it is right to do it: And
 if a thing be evidently wrong, and which
 our consciences must condemn, is not this
 an obvious reason why we should not do
 it? Can we have a sense of right or
 wrong at all, without feeling in ourselves
 that disposition of mind which every one
 expresseth by these words, I ought to do
 what is right; I ought to avoid what is
 wrong. But hitherto I have spoken of
 conscience only as pointing out to us our
 way, and as judging of our actions ac-
 cording to the sense of good and evil
 with which we are endowed. But this
 power becomes sacred upon another account.
 We cannot deliberately consider these spi-
 ritual senses, with which our maker hath
 dignify'd our frame, without concluding
 that he, who endowed human nature with
 them, is possessed of them himself in
 the most perfect possible degree. As we
 cannot but see an excellence and per-
 fection in them, and that they are the
 sources

sources of the highest happiness in our-
 selves or any other being, that we have
 any idea of; so we can see nothing in
 them which is incompatible with any o-
 ther of the divine perfections. Were we
 to suppose that the supreme being dis-
 cerned no difference between good and
 evil; we must consider him as a being
 most imperfect, and in whom infinite
 power and understanding, would be in-
 deed most formidable, but not at all ex-
 cellent or lovely. We must therefore rest
 in it, that God hath this discernment of
 good and evil in him in the most perfect
 manner; that the former is above all things
 pleasing to him, and the latter displea-
 sing. We cannot help concluding the
 same thing, from the joy and other ad-
 vantages which he hath annexed to the
 practice of virtue by our original consti-
 tution, and that he hath made vice in so
 many respects its own punishment. Yet
 what we see of this at present, doth not
 at all come up to our ideas of a perfect
 moral administration; in which, without
 exception in one single instance, every
 individual, without respect of persons,
 should receive according to *his deeds*, and
 bear

S E R M.
X.

SERM. *bear his own burthen*; and therefore we

X. cannot help being persuaded, that there cometh a season, in which this shall be the case. Thus, while our consciences point out what is right, and what is wrong, approving the one and condemning the other; they at the same time direct our views to the supreme being as our judge, who will be pleased with, and reward good actions, and be displeased with, and punish bad ones. This giveth conscience a great and sacred power; and on this account we owe more deference and attention to it, than to all the world. The dictates of a well informed conscience, are the dictates of our maker; every contradiction to them is a transgression of his laws, for which conscience forebodes punishment; so that no wonder the wounds of it are hardly to be born, and give the most exquisite pain.

The absolute authority of conscience is to be very particularly noticed. It doth not admit evil to be done upon any account whatsoever; no interest must stand in its way, so as to produce disloyalty to it. No matter what men may suffer for obeying its dictates, loss of name and reputation,

reputation, loss of estate, loss of life, it demandeth obedience at all adventures; and knows no compliance with evil in any single instance. The submission must be absolute. It alone possesses the throne in the heart, and in a right disciplined mind holds it unrivalled. It is really very pleasing to observe the power of it, as it hath appeared in many instances, baffling the power of the most formidable tyrants, unmoved at all their threats, at all their tortures. The proud and impious Nebuchadnezzar, with all his hosts, and with his burning fiery furnace, could make no impression upon the three poor friendless, and to outward appearance, helpless Jews, who dared openly, and to his face, to oppose his impious edict. Their answer is admirable; Dan. iii. 16. *O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter; if it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand O King. But if not, be it known to thee, O King, that we will not serve thy Gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.* And a spirit no less heroic hath been seen in innumerable other instances;

SERM. in cases of the like nature. Thus we see

X. conscience admitteth of no control: The rights of it may be violated by the gratification of evil lusts, and the power of it may be weakened, or in a manner destroyed; but where it is in its natural and proper strength, and holds its proper station, it's authority is absolute; and it descends most minutely to all things which come under the notion of right and wrong. If we attend to it, we shall see that most things which come under the notion of evil, and which are disagreeable and offensive to our spiritual senses, are what are hurtful to our neighbour; and those things which are approved and lovely, tend to the good of others: And indeed the connections of things, and their mutual relations, are such, that we can hardly name an instance, in which we do evil to our selves, but at the same time we are hurtful to others. Yet there are some instances in which what is merely personal, falleth under the notion of right and wrong; and is a matter under the cognizance of conscience; and it would seem that virtue and vice might exist even if a person were alone in the midst of the earth.

earth. However, the best philosopher that SERM.
X.
 ever appeared in the world hath taught
 us, *Matt. xxii. 37.* That right affection
 towards God and man, is indeed the sum
 of morality. *Thou shalt love the Lord
 thy God with all thy heart, with all thy
 mind, with all thy strength; and thy neigh-
 bour as thy self; upon these two command-
 ments hang all the law and the prophets;*
 and agreeably to this, the Apostle Paul
 teacheth us, *Rom. xiii. 10.* *That love is
 the fulfilling of the law.* But whatsoever
 it is that falleth under the notion of
 right and wrong, there conscience is to
 direct and have the dominion, whether
 it be a matter which concerneth others,
 or ourselves only. And the voice of con-
 science is really to be considered as the
 voice of God; conscience, I say, well en-
 lightened and informed by the principles of
 reason, and by the word of God.

This ought to be very particularly at-
 tended to. Through prejudice and er-
 roneous opinions in matters of religion,
 the dictates of conscience may be some-
 times quite wrong; it may condemn what
 is innocent, it may approve what is culp-
 able; to these mistakes we owe all super-
 stition,

SERM. fiction, and all the evils which are in it's
 X. train; to these we owe narrowness of
 mind in religion, and that scrupulosity
 which is often painful, and not seldom a
 great snare to men; and to these frequently is owing licentiousness of life, and indulgence in things which are really wrong. But we are endowed with reason, and a capacity of inquiry, and of judging in matters of religion; and cool, deliberate, impartial inquiry, will seldom fail of preparing men for forming right judgments: Or if a case should happen in which, after all the pains they can take, they are at a loss, or are led into involuntary mistakes, surely those will not be imputed to them as guilt; their sincerity will be accepted, otherwise no man could assure his heart before God, but upon supposition of infallibility of judgment, which is a thing no man can pretend to.

Upon the whole, we see what provision the God of nature hath made for the order and government of the human mind. The whole train of the private affections are intended to be under the control of a deliberate regard to our own
 interest

interest and happiness. The whole train of the good and social affections, under the check and direction of a calm deliberate attention to what is the greatest good we can do to others; and over all, a power of a nature quite distinct from these, a sense of right, and conscience, which is the most excellent and sacred in our frame, and by which we are capable of the highest kind of happiness, and of communion with the superior orders of being, even with the supreme. It is this power which is by far of the greatest energy, by which the beautiful order of the soul is most effectually maintained, and the subordination of the inferior affections and desires to those of an higher station preserved. From this power the good affections have their greatest strength; and it will be readily acknowledged that the whole system is beautiful, and contrived with the greatest wisdom; all resting on this plain and obvious maxim, that we are always to do what is right, and avoid what is wrong. In our doing this, the whole soul will be preserved in a proper temper, and the great end of life which this admirable

SERMON. composition aimeth at, will be successfully served. It will be so without our entering into any laborious and deep inquiries what that end is; for by doing what is right, we shall most assuredly attain to it.

I shall conclude this discourse with taking notice of, and endeavouring to remove one difficulty which must occur upon what hath been said; namely, that of those affections which God hath planted in the heart, even in their best and most perfect state, some have a tendency directly opposite to others, and points to ends directly opposite to one another. For example, in many instances self-love draws one way, and an affectionate regard to the good of others, just the opposite; directly as two antagonist muscles in the human body: and it may be impossible to reconcile these affections by any thing in our power. In the same manner, conscience may direct us to an action as our duty which is contrary to the tendencies both of self-love and good-will; and, as has been said, it absolutely prohibits our committing any crime, knowing it to be such, upon any account whatsoever, even

to save our own existence. Now, what S E R M.
is to be done in this case? Our constitu- X.

tion we cannot alter. These different tendencies of self-love and conscience, we cannot possibly reconcile; and could the author of nature intend that there should be an everlasting contradiction between those principles which are most important and essential in our frame? Here it seemeth indeed that we want the interposition of the author of our frame. And it appears, from this state of things, highly probable, that it was not his intention to leave nature intirely to the principles with which he originally endowed it, without any interposition of his own; for in that case, it must indeed appear an imperfect work. Accordingly, reason itself allows us to hope for such an interposition, by which those who followed the dictates of conscience, at any expence, shall have their wrongs redressed, and their losses compensated. Revelation assures us of this; and points out a future judgment, in which the righteous shall be vindicated and made happy. So that whatever a person may suffer in compliance with the dictates of conscience, he shall not be a final loser,

SERM. but indeed a great gainer. By this appointment, the private, and which are
 X. called the selfish affections, are brought over to the side of conscience, and become of it's party; and conscience and inclination go harmoniously on; which it is plain, without such an interposition, they would not do. Without it, we would be of such a make, that the highest principle in our constitution would pursue measures that might cut off intirely our existence; and the highest excellency in our frame become the utter destruction of it. This can never be the case under God's government; and therefore, since we know that many have given up life rather than do violence to the rights of conscience, we must believe that there is another state, and another world, where all, which at present appears imperfect in the divine administration, shall be set right, to the full satisfaction of the whole intellectual and moral creation.

SERMON XI.

Of the Loss of the Soul, and the
dreadful torments which it may
suffer in a future state.

MATTHEW XVI. 26.

*For what is a man profited, if he shall
gain the whole world, and lose his own
soul? Or what shall a man give in ex-
change for his soul?*

IN some former discourses I gave you
a short representation of the powers
and faculties of the human soul; the
chief design of which was to shew
the excellency of them, and how much
our happiness and enjoyment must have
been

SERM. been intended by the author of our be-
 XI. ings. But it ought to be deeply consider-

ed, that these powers by which we become capable of so much happiness, do likewise render us obnoxious to great misery. We see from our blessed Saviour's expression in the text, that the soul may be lost. The meaning of this is not, that it shall be lost to existence; for we have reason from the light of nature to believe, and it is fully declared in the holy scriptures, that the souls of the bad, as well as the good, shall subsist after death; and that, in another state, both good and bad shall receive from the Judge of all the earth according to their works. But though the immortal spirit cannot be lost to existence, it may be lost intirely to happiness; it may suffer so much misery, that *being* may become a most grievous burthen: And this is no doubt what our Saviour intended. The soul is indeed lost, when, under the power of evil dispositions, and in a corrupted and hateful moral state, it goeth into the other world, the object of divine displeasure and indignation, and with its powers and affections so perverted, that instead of being sources of joy and bliss, they become

become inexhaustible springs of sorrow S.R.E.M.
and woe. Now, here we may distinctly **XI.**
consider, First, the misery which must
spring from a consciousness of bad affec-
tions and a bad life; and Secondly, what
may be apprehended from the just displea-
sure and wrath of God.

I begin with the first of these, which,
by what we know of ourselves, and of
the powers of our minds, we may best
understand. It may be in general ob-
served, that from the sense of right and
wrong which God hath planted in us, and
the excellency and beauty we see in worthy
affections and good actions, and the vile-
ness and deformity there is in evil af-
fections and evil actions, there ariseth
high delight in exercising good affections
and in doing good actions, and from our
reflecting upon them. Perhaps there is
nothing in this world which giveth so
great joy to a well-disposed mind. On the
other hand, there is a corruption and de-
formity in evil affections and actions
which giveth great pain to the reflecting
mind; a pollution in them which maketh
a man vile in his own sight, and to him-
self abominable. I deny not that men
may

SERM. may have pleasure in very bad actions, for
XI. it is often the case, and perhaps in reflecting upon them too, in some instances. But this can be the case only where corrupt lusts and desires have the present dominion over the mind, and the moral powers are in a manner prostrated, and lost to the purposes of them. Conscience may be so far enfeebled, I might rather say, benumbed, that men shall commit great sin without painful remorse, and shall become vile and abominable without seeming to be sensible of their being so. But this insensibility of the moral powers cannot continue. Sooner or later conscience will awake, and bear a faithful testimony. It hath often been seen to recover it's sensibility even in this life, in some of the wickedest of men; and will always naturally do so, when those things by which the moral powers have been depress'd and enfeebled are removed, and men come to think coolly and deliberately, and to judge impartially. And if there should be no awakening of conscience in this world, we have good reason to believe that it shall awake in the next, with all it's strength and sensibility. Then

the morally impure and guilty must see SERM.
that they are hateful and abominable; XI.
must loath and abhor themselves. And
what must a man's state be, when he is
an object of abhorrence to himself, an
object vile in his own eyes; vile in the
eyes of all others? Here it is to be care-
fully attended to, that though the ori-
ginal sense of right and wrong is uniform,
and the same in all men, yet there is a
vast variety in the manner in which mens
imaginations, in pursuance of it, are af-
fected; a great variety in the degree of
pleasure or pain it yields, and in the mo-
ral taste, with respect to the delicacy of
it. We see men who judge in the same
manner concerning things as good and
evil in general, who yet are not in the
same manner affected by them. Some
shall pass over bad actions in themselves,
or others, acknowledging them to be bad,
without any severe animadversion; while
others behold or reflect upon the same
actions with pain and horror. Just as
some persons pass over, with very little
notice, the beauties or defects in works of
the statuary or painter, while persons of
taste and discernment shall be much af-
fected.

SERM.

XL

affected by them. This variety, in the degrees of moral taste and discernment, may be owing to different causes ; to the original make and frame, or to education, to custom and habit, and others like these. But however, when we judge of the high delight which springeth from a right moral temper, and a virtuous conduct of life, we must attend to what the most exquisite relish, and the most perfect taste of them yieldeth : And when we attend to the pains which arise from a consciousness of a bad moral state, and of a polluted and guilty life, we must consider what that pain shall be in a state of the greatest sensibility. This is the way to judge aright. And surely there is reason to believe that in the life to come, as the happy will have an exquisite and most delicate relish of the joys of their state, so the miserable will have an exquisite sense of the pain of theirs. This is a prospect really most alarming ; I think, I may say, of all things, most alarming. How excruciating have the pains of a guilty conscience been to some persons even in this world ? Have they not risen to the very distraction of melancholy ? Human nature cannot

cannot in this world appear so deplorable SER M.
in any other instance. XI.

Now, abstracting from what may be apprehended from the wrath of God, the very sense of deformity and vileness may arise to such a degree, as to make existence an object of horror to a man. And it is fit to consider this in the first place, as it is the foundation of all the rest: For could a person be pleased with, and satisfied in himself, and discern an excellency and beauty in his own state, it may be truly said, that nothing external to him could make him altogether miserable; he might endure most grievous pains; but still he would have in himself some consolation. But when a person must continually loath himself, and when those very original powers by which he was made capable of high felicity, become the means and engines of torment to him, how miserable must he be? Our blessed Saviour is by most interpreters thought to mean a condemning conscience, when he speaks of *the worm that dieth not*: And a dreadful inmate it is, as always preying on the vitals. Let it be added to all that hath been said upon this head, that our imaginations,

SERMON. ginations, our sensibility, discernment and

XI. taste in these matters, are not in our power. That imagination often getteth the better of all our endeavours in this world, is what we sadly experience. That the sorrows of it are not to be managed nor controled by the meer command of our will, we know; but we also know that it is in the power of our maker; and if in righteous judgment he shall use it as a means of punishing the guilty, who can say to what a degree of sensibility it may be raised, and what pain it may give? It has been known, that mens reflections upon one single unworthy action have given them such pain, that they have become impatient of life; and have become their own executioners: But what must be the case, when conscience presenteth a long train of criminal actions, a course of evil doing? When this is the case, had a man no creature in the universe to compare himself with, he must find himself in great misery. But the matter will appear to be heightened, when we consider, that it does not seem conceivable that men should have such a sense of moral deformity, but they must

at

at the same time have a proportionable S E R M.
sensibility of moral beauty and excellence : **XI.**

And we may, I think, conceive such a sensibility, when the mind is in a very corrupted state, without any love of it. For a capacity of beholding the glory, and of imagining the dignity and excellence of virtue, is a very different thing from a cordial attachment to it. Nor is there any thing more common than for men to be under a necessity of admiring eminent worth, when they have no inclinations to imitate it, and indeed are in their hearts averse to it; rather enemies than friends to the character. Now, if we shall suppose, in the minds of the condemned and miserable, a sensibility of moral excellence, in proportion to their sense of deformity, how must they appear to themselves in comparison with those, who, in all the lustre of holiness and goodness, are shining as so many stars, as the scriptures speak, forever and ever; the objects of their envy, perhaps of their hatred? Knowing, well knowing, that this vast and everlasting difference between them is altogether owing to themselves, and the work of their own hands:

T

For

SERMON. For they cannot say, but what these ac-

XI. tually are, they might have been. And should we, besides all this, suppose the soul to be full of passions that never were restrained, never disciplined in this world, and that now admit of no restraint, but rage as so many furies; what must the state of the mind be? It hath been the opinion of some learned and wise men, that even the passions of animal nature, and the love of sensual pleasure, might continue in the soul after its separation from the body. For this they have given reasons, which to say the least, are plausible; particularly, as it hath been often seen that such lusts have had great power in the mind when the capacity of gratification was no more. Now, should this be the case, and the mind fermented with passions which never can be gratified, how miserable the state of it! Upon the whole, were we to suppose no punishment inflicted upon the wicked, but that misery of which the powers and affections of the mind are the sources, the state must be extremely unhappy. This brings to mind a passage in the greatest of all our *English* poets, in which satan is introduced.

introduced, as after his fall reflecting upon S E R M.
his state. *He found himself in the lowest* **XI.**
hell; but the poet representeth him as
finding in himself an hell still deeper and
more miserable than that. A most affect-
ing way of expressing it, that our greatest
miseries are immediately from ourselves;
and nothing can make us so unhappy as
we make ourselves. Thus what is origi-
nally the noblest work of God in this
world, may be rendered the most hateful
and abominable; and what was capable of
the highest kind of happiness be subjected
to the greatest misery. I hope it will ap-
pear to you that in all this there is no-
thing romantic, and nothing but what ar-
iseth naturally from our very constitution,
as reasonable and moral agents.

But, in the next place, we are to con-
sider what may be dreaded as the effect
of the just displeasure and indignation of
the supreme ruler. It doth indeed ap-
pear, from what hath been said; that if
an awakened and condemning conscience
is left to itself, it may, without any o-
ther cause, make the state extreamly
wretched. However, no man from any
principles of reason can justly infer that

SERM. there shall be no other punishment ; and

XI. it is certain, the holy scriptures represent
 to us, in the strongest terms, punishment
 of another nature ; namely, strokes inflicted by the divine hand, under the notion of punishment. Thus our blessed saviour as he speaketh of a *worm that shall not die*, so likewise, of a *fire that shall not be quenched*. And, in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, represents the rich man as being in torments in hell, and as scorched in that flame. And the apostle Paul speaketh of indignation and wrath, tribulation, and anguish, in reserve for every soul of man who doth evil. He speaketh also, Theff. i. 7. of the Lord Jesus being revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, to take vengeance on them who have not known God, or obeyed the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ ; who, saith he, shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power. And we read in Rev. xxi. 8. of those, who are condemned, being cast into a lake burning with fire and brimstone, which is the second death ; and xxth and 10th verse, of their being tormented day and night for ever and ever. I be-

lieve

lieve it is generally thought, that these representations are figurative. We all understand the representations of the new Jerusalem, or heaven, as of this kind. And whenever we read of walls of jasper, and gates of pearl, and streets of gold, we make no difficulty of such matters, considering them as figurative representations; well knowing that the happiness of the heavenly state hath no sort of connection with gold or precious stones. And for the same reason we may consider lakes of fire and brimstone, as figures representing the great sufferings of those who are condemn'd to that state. But it is certain, that the general intention of all these representations is, to shew us that positive punishment will, by the supreme ruler, be inflicted upon the ungodly, as an expression of his displeasure; and we may be sure, that this punishment will be directed by the wisdom and justice of God, so as to answer the great ends and designs of his moral administration. But how far they may be carried, and how severe they may be, who can take upon him particularly to declare? *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.* His

SERM. power is almighty and none can deliver

IX. out of his hand. It is one of the gravest

and most weighty considerations which can offer itself to the human mind, that the scriptures never represent any end of those punishments. But that the separation of the righteous from the wicked shall be everlasting. Now, the design of all these strong expressions is plainly to impress our minds deeply with a sense of the infinite danger there is in a wicked and unrighteous course of life. It is an ingenious observation which hath been made by some persons upon this argument, that these terrible objects are viewed by us at a distance; and that the reality in them shall be as great as our present views and imaginations lead us to apprehend. We know that objects, seen by the bodily eye at a great distance, appear far less than they really are; and therefore if we would judge rightly concerning the true dimensions of such objects, we must suppose them a vast deal larger in their dimensions than they appear to us; consequently, that any one at the place where they are, or in a place as distant from us, who would hold up to us a landscape or representation of what

what they really were, must draw it much SERM.
larger than the objects themselves; and IX.
yet they would be nothing at all larger in
their appearance to us, at that distant view.

In like manner, as those objects which are the subjects of the present discourse are viewed at a distance, the representations of them may not be too strong, seeing the views we at present get by them may not at all be aggravated. But whatever there may be in this, it is plain, that the design of the sacred writers was to impress our minds with the deepest and most awful sense of that state of punishment which is in reserve for the finally wicked and impenitent.

But while we are speaking of the Divine displeasure and indignation, it cannot but occur to our minds that this itself must be grievous punishment. To be the object of God's displeasure and aversion, must to every one who can think, appear a most unhappy thing. To be beloved of God is the most solid and substantial honour; to be an object of aversion and abhorrence to him must be the greatest infamy: and surely, they who are the objects of his aversion, must be the aversion of the whole

SERM. worthy intellectual creation. Here is an

XI. enmity then, which appeareth to be quite insupportable. Yet again, if we shall consider the desperate state of those who are thus cast out of the divine presence and favour, it will appear that the enmity must be mutual. Any being which is an object only of terror, must be proportionably the object of aversion; and one, in this state, would desire nothing more earnestly, than that there were no such being, that there was an end of its existence. In like manner, if those unhappy persons have nothing to hope, but every thing to fear from the supreme being; they must be enemies, utter enemies to him, and must account it happiness, were the thing possible, that there were no such being. They who are unrighteous are represented, while they are in this world, *as enemies to God, by wicked works in their minds.* And it may be truly said that they are so. How much greater that enmity in a state absolutely desperate! what a state of the mind must this be! to be at irreconcilable enmity with infinite excellency and goodness, to hate a being who is infinitely amiable; and existing in a state

a state which is the strongest imaginable **SERM.**
contradiction to nature, a state which is **XI.**
in truth diabolical, and which one cannot think of without the utmost horror!

There is really no consideration which hath been offered upon this argument which will so much move an ingenuous mind as this, or that will set the misery of that state in so affecting a light, as that it is a state of enmity with the infinitely excellent, good, and lovely, parent of the universe. To reflect upon it as such, raises an amazing mixture of aversion and horror. How earnestly would a good mind wish there were no such beings in the creation! and that there never had been such an object of contemplation to the human mind! 'tis distress even to think of it. And yet from what the ungodly may experience passing in their own minds in this life, they may judge what the temper of the mind is like to be, in a state utterly desperate. Upon the whole, however we may be led into such particular speculations and conjectures, from what we know concerning the powers and faculties of the human mind, and of the influence of moral depravity

SERMON. pravity and corruption upon them, and
 XI. from what the holy scriptures have said
 concerning a future state of punishment
 for the impenitently wicked and rebellious; yet what our minds ought principally to fix upon, is this, that in the state and world to come the righteous shall be rewarded, and the wicked shall be punished; that the supreme ruler will make a great distinction between them; and men shall be rewarded according to their works. Thus our saviour teacheth in the words immediately following my text;
For the son of man shall come in the glory of his father with his angels, and then shall he reward every man according to his works.
 And as to the particulars which may be intended by the figurative representations we have in scripture, the mind securely rests in this, that the judge of all the earth will do right. That the hand which ministreth rewards and punishments is under the direction of the most perfect wisdom, equity, and goodness; and that therefore the administration must approve itself to the whole intellectual creation. We may err in our interpretation of figurative representations; but we cannot err in this, that

that perfect wisdom and righteousness are SERM.
enthroned above ; and that no decree shall XI.
proceed from that throne but what is
perfectly agreeable to truth, to what is
fit and right. And particularly, as all pu-
nishment is settled by this perfect wisdom
and equity, both with respect to the mea-
sure and the duration of it ; so there will
never be any just reason to complain.

Having thus represented to you what
is meant by the loss of the soul, I should,
in the next place, illustrate that which
our saviour teacheth, that it can be no
profit to a man to gain the whole world,
if he should lose his own soul. But this
is an argument, I must defer to some other
occasion, and shall conclude the present
discourse with a few reflections upon what
hath been said.

The subject I have been treating is one,
which of all things most painfully affect-
eth the mind. It is with some reluctance
the thoughts are turned to it ; they glad-
ly part from it. Who can take pleasure
in the view or imagination of human na-
ture in misery ? Yet our meditating up-
on the terrors of God, may sometimes be
of signal use, to awaken the conscience,
to

SERM. to give life and spirit in the reformation

XI. of what is amiss, and in the diligent performance of our duty, so that we may escape the wrath to come. I have endeavoured in the past discourses to give you a very particular view of the springs of that happiness in which the righteous shall for ever rejoice: And it is but fit we should seriously view likewise the misery into which the wicked shall fall. We see the soul of man, capable of, and intend for, such unspeakable happiness, is likewise liable to inexpressible misery. *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man, what God hath laid up for those that love him; and who hath fully conceived of that tribulation and anguish which are laid up in reserve for those who hate him?* But what most naturally occurs to the mind upon this occasion, is, what pity it is that a creature so excellent as the human soul, and capable of such bliss, should ever become so miserable; what pity that any such creature should be lost! To this there is nothing that I know, to be said, but that that very frame, and those powers which make the mind capable of so much happiness, do also,

also, in the very nature of the thing, SERM. make it susceptible of so much misery. **XI.**

And it doth not appear, that a creature could be of the human make and frame, but which, by an abuse of it's powers, must also be susceptible of moral stain and misery. And here the mind must rest; I know nothing else it can rest in. But let us not represent God to our own minds as the author of moral evil, because he made us of such a species or kind. For if there was to be such a kind of beings at all, they must be liable to evil. *But God is not tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man; but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. Then lust when it hath conceived, bringeth forth sin; and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death.* James i. 13. It is from our own unhappy choice that the evil proceedeth, and if there be a freedom of choice at all, men must have been capable of choosing both evil and good. It may be urged, it had been better that such a species of creatures had not been made. This is a way of thinking indeed, into which the bad and the miserable may be supposed very naturally

SERM. naturally to fall; but it will never approve itself to the good and the virtuous, who have hope toward God of great and eternal felicity. These cannot but look upon the existence which God hath given them as a most invaluable favour; will always find reason to rejoice in it. And why should the foreseen miscarriage of the evil and bad, have prevented the bringing into the creation of God so much happiness and excellency? Why should that which is the very glory of the creation have had no existence? If this, which hath been mentioned on the other hand, is a good argument with respect to mankind, it is a good argument likewise with respect to the angelic orders, and must be a good argument with respect to all created moral agents whatsoever. If none of these had existed, nor any thing in the creation of God, above the brutal kind, then indeed this creation must have been of small value, and the question might, not irrationally, be put, why was there any work of creation at all? And upon this supposition of no creation, there could have been no exertion of the infinite power and goodness of God.

Illustration

Thus

Thus it is plain, that if we pursue such SERM.
inquiries, and give an uneasy and dis- XI.
contented spirit full way; it will lead us
into all absurdities. But these matters,
comparatively, we have nothing to do
with. The world is made by the power
and wisdom of God such as it is; the
frame and constitution of it will not
change into a conformity to our desires.
We may torment ourselves with vain
wishes and imaginations, but the state and
condition of things will continue what it
is, and indeed, we see in it such cha-
racters of goodness, as well as wisdom
and power, that we cannot but believe
that the author had a most excellent and
worthy design in the glorious work: And
with respect to every individual, the great
question is this, whether happiness is not
brought within his reach? Whether he
hath not all needful encouragement, and
the most rational hopes given him, in pur-
suing after it? If he hath, then let all
those melancholy and moving sentiments
concerning the misery into which bad
men fall, be improved as incentives to
turn from their path, and to apply to
those labours and that course of life,
by which high and eternal happiness will
be

SERM. be ensured. This is the proper use to be
 XI. made of our perplexity; and in this manner we may become assured, that *being* will prove to us an invaluable blessing.

Another reflection I would make from what hath been said upon the subject is this. We see that the happiness of the righteous is to spring immediately from the state and temper of their own minds; and so is the misery of the wicked; it springeth principally from their bad and corrupted moral state. External things are but of secondary consideration in this respect. Now, from this we may see how vain all dependence upon external rites must be to make men happy. And how miserably absurd it must be, at the approaches of death, to rely upon such things as these; be they what they will, can they alter the state of the mind? Can they infuse good affections? Can they give the new heart and the right spirit? Can they render a person lovely in the eye of his maker, or turn away his indignation from him? And indeed there cannot be a more pernicious delusion, than to ascribe to such external rites an efficacy, as inseparable from them. I hope we have not so learned Christ: And that we are

are well instructed that a right temper and state of the mind is all in all. But as many, in the folly and weakness of superstition, are betrayed into an absurd dependence upon external rites and ceremony, on the approaches of death; so it is to be feared that a dependence upon a late, perhaps, a death-bed repentance, is a snare to not a few; who put off that great and necessary work of repentance to the last. If we may judge from the scriptural account of repentance, which is a renovation of the heart and life; if we may judge from the effects of repentance upon a sick-bed, in persons who have been restored to health, we have little reason to believe it will be available. O! how different a thing is such a sudden emotion, the effect of present dreadful apprehensions of misery, from a fixed and settled right temper of spirit; from a state of mind in which good and worthy affections have long prevailed, and by continued habits of righteousness, have been strengthened and confirmed? In which the whole soul may be said to be formed for happiness, and the relish for it is quick and delicate.

SERM. be ensured. This is the proper use to be
 XI. made of our perplexity; and in this man-
 ner we may become assured, that *being*
 will prove to us an invaluable blessing.

Another reflection I would make from what hath been said upon the subject is this. We see that the happiness of the righteous is to spring immediately from the state and temper of their own minds; and so is the misery of the wicked; it springeth principally from their bad and corrupted moral state. External things are but of secondary consideration in this respect. Now, from this we may see how vain all dependence upon external rites must be to make men happy. And how miserably absurd it must be, at the approaches of death, to rely upon such things as these; be they what they will, can they alter the state of the mind? Can they infuse good affections? Can they give the new heart and the right spirit? Can they render a person lovely in the eye of his maker, or turn away his indignation from him? And indeed there cannot be a more pernicious delusion, than to ascribe to such external rites an efficacy, as inseparable from them. I hope *we* have not so learned Christ: And that we
 are

are well instructed that a right temper **SERM.**
and state of the mind is all in all. But **XI.**

as many, in the folly and weakness of superstition, are betrayed into an absurd dependence upon external rites and ceremony, on the approaches of death; so it is to be feared that a dependence upon a late, perhaps, a death-bed repentance, is a snare to not a few; who put off that great and necessary work of repentance to the last. If we may judge from the scriptural account of repentance, which is a renovation of the heart and life; if we may judge from the effects of repentance upon a sick-bed, in persons who have been restored to health, we have little reason to believe it will be available. O! how different a thing is such a sudden emotion; the effect of present dreadful apprehensions of misery, from a fixed and settled right temper of spirit; from a state of mind in which good and worthy affections have long prevailed, and by continued habits of righteousness, have been strengthened and confirmed? In which the whole soul may be said to be formed for happiness, and the relish for it is quick and delicate?

SERMON XII.

The insignificance of all temporal acquisitions when opposite to future happiness, and purchased by *the Loss of the Soul.*

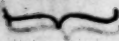
MATTHEW XVI. 26.

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own Soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his Soul?

IN several late discourses, I have presented to you the powers and faculties of the human soul, principally with a view of shewing the excellency of it; and upon the last occasion discoursed concerning the loss of it. I shall not repeat any thing said upon these subjects

subjects. But proceed to illustrate the justness of our Saviour's doctrine in the text, that a man is no gainer who maketh the largest acquisitions, getteth the whole world, were the thing possible, into his possession, and *loseth his own soul*; layeth himself open to the misery which I had occasion to represent to you in explaining that expression. This is a subject of discourse that one cannot enter upon without concern. No one but will readily yield to the truth and justness of what our blessed Saviour here teacheth, and freely acknowledge that a person must be an infinite loser who loseth his own soul, tho' he should gain the whole world. And yet how many act, and if we may judge of their sentiments from their actions, how many think, as if there were no truth in this? The spirit of the world possessing them, rendereth temporal acquisitions the object of their great, I may say, their only care and sollicitude. These they consider as the only thing substantial, and look upon what are called the riches of the mind as phantastical and of no value. Such things are neglected intirely, and if what concerneth the external state

SERMON. be taken care of and built up, no matter
XII. if the soul goes to ruin.

 If it be thus, it can never be unseasonable to discourse upon this most interesting argument; not indeed by vain declamations upon temporal possessions, as utterly insignificant and unworthy of the cares or labours of a wise man. Or as if an easy and plentiful fortune in the world, were not a very desirable thing, capable of being improved to excellent purposes, and did not give much joy and honest satisfaction. All such declamations are against truth and nature, and can make no impression. Let all the value be set upon wealth and temporal possessions which ought to be set upon them, as ministering much to the convenience, comfort and pleasure of life; as supporting decency and dignity in it, as attended with an importance and weight, by which a wise man may do much service to others, and find much pleasure arising to himself; and by which he hath some security and defence from the evils and sufferings to which deep penury is liable. I say, let all the value which nature teacheth us to set upon temporal acquisitions, be set upon

upon them ; still it will appear a most SERM.
 just maxim that should a man *gain the* XII.
world and *lose his own soul*, he must be
 an infinite loser. This is really the case,
 even suppose there were no exquisite pains
 and sufferings in that state which is ex-
 pressed by the loss of the soul, and if we
 take nothing into the account but the
 loss of the riches of the mind, and the
 pleasures annexed to them. For it is un-
 doubtedly true, that those joys and that
 happiness which are annexed to wisdom,
 that is, a good heart and life, are higher
 and more satisfying than any pleasures
 which external things can yield ; and
 therefore he who is cut off from the for-
 mer, and depends only upon the latter,
 does indeed suffer great loss. This may
 perhaps appear to many a paradox and
 incredible, but such as have experience
 know the truth of it. *Thou hast put more
 gladness into my heart*, saith the Psalmist,
*than they when their corn and their wine
 most abounded.* Yet it may be difficult to
 prove it to such as have made no trial,
 and must judge, at least, do judge, ac-
 cording to the sensations they now have,
 and not according to what they have not.

SERM. And if they have a quick and lively relish
XII. of the pleasures of sense, and little or no
relish at all of the pleasures of the mind,
or those which are annexed to virtue and
religion, no wonder they should prefer
the former infinitely to the latter. Yet
if such would set themselves down to
think calmly and deliberately, they might
see reason to conclude against the language
of their present sensations. They have
the testimony of all who have made the
experiment, to the superior excellency of
the pleasures of the mind in the practice
of virtue and religion. They have the
testimony of all that have gone before
them, and of all the good and worthy
who are their co-temporaries. This is
a matter in the strongest terms declared
by the servants of God in the holy scrip-
tures; and very clearly declared in the
writings of the wisest ancients, who laid
their foundations in reason and nature, and
in their own experience. It seems like-
wise to be clearly demonstrable from the
nature of things; for that the objects of
that delight which is annexed to righte-
ousness of heart and life, are of the most
excellent kind, does not seem to admit of
any

any doubt: And the scriptures often ap-^{S E R M.}
peal to a standard of excellency, which is ^{XII.}
originally fixed in every mans heart, by
which he may be enabled to judge in such
matters; and constantly suppose such a
standard by which we are to try things
that differ. And who will say that he
hath no rule or standard by which to
judge of excellency and beauty in the
various objects with which he is conver-
fant? Who will not acknowledge that
there is more excellency in an heroic
action in the field, than in furnishing out
a luxurious table, in all the variety and
pride of it? Who will not acknowledge
that there is more excellency in prudence
and wisdom, than in mere animal strength?
Who will not own that there is more ex-
cellency in the improving conversation of
knowing intimate friends, than in the
tumultuous uproar of the debauched and
licentious? Or, who will not profess to
know the difference between greatness of
mind and dignity of sentiment, and mean-
ness and baseness of spirit? If then the
objects of that happiness which is annex-
ed to the practice of virtue are the most
excellent, it clearly follows that if there

SERMON. be a taste for them, the pleasure in the
XII. fruition must also be the greater. This
I would have impressed upon the mind
in the strongest and deepest characters,
for indeed, it is of the utmost importance
to us; and without an abiding sense of
it, we shall be greatly at a loss. He that
hath no ear can have no pleasure in the
most exquisite musical performances; but
could he acquire an ear, they would give
him high delight: and so in all other
things. The most excellent objects can
give us no delight if we have no taste for
them; and if we attain to that taste,
they will give joy in proportion to their
excellency. So the attentive mind, with-
out at present relishing, may be able to
demonstrate to itself what the entertain-
ment must be, if it could relish. To take
the most signal instance of all for the il-
lustration of this; a man who hath no
taste for moral excellency, can have no
joy in the contemplation of his maker.
Yet, upon the principles now mentioned,
he may demonstrate to his own mind,
that this matchless object must give the
highest joy to such as can discern the
excellency of it; and that what the scrip-
tures

tures say concerning the vision of God, S E R M.
as the crown of all felicity, is perfectly XII.
according to truth and nature. As we

have the testimony of all, who speak from experience, to the truth of what I am now illustrating, and have from the nature of things and the frame of the human mind, what may be called demonstration of this truth; so we have a most affecting proof of it, when we turn our thoughts to the order of beings above us; to those blessed spirits which are far superior to us in power, and perfection, and blessedness. These are far separated from, and raised above, all which the children of this world, and who go on in darkness, most admire. It would be distress to them, no doubt, to be thrust down into a state like ours. Yet their happiness is far superior to what we can boast of. And what shall we say more? Is there any happiness like to that of the supreme mind? Surely, this is far removed from all sensual joy.

To sum up this argument, let the children of vanity and pride put on all the glittering shew they can, and shine in all the richest gems; let their dependents
be

SERMON. be in the greatest numbers, and their
XII. power over their fellow creatures most
extended; let their acquisitions be as
boundless as can be supposed, to support
their state; and all things prosper with
them. Let the voluptuous and luxurious
compound things, and vary their pleasures
as they will; let them be supposed in
perfect health to enjoy and to have the
most exquisite relish of them; yet is it
unquestionable truth, that the man of
wisdom and righteousness enjoys greater
happiness, and hath higher and purer joy
than they. Taste and imagination may
greatly magnify things; but no imagina-
tion can create what is not, nor make an
object of delight which is in itself less ex-
cellent, equal in value to what is more
excellent. A man may say to himself,
very justly and truly, had I power to frame
to myself any external paradise which
imagination itself could paint, yet in that
I should not be so happy, as I may be
in the fruition of those pleasures which
spring up in the mind, and that paradise
which my maker hath provided for me
within; and if these are the words of
truth and soberness, may we seriously at-
tend

tend to them, and let no vain imagina-
tions prevail upon us to forsake those
principles which lie at the foundation of
all true wisdom.

SERM.
XII.

It ought to be farther observed here, that as the possessions and pleasures of the mind are the most excellent, so they are most our own; indeed, they only are what we may call our own: Wherever we are, we find them; whithersoever we go, they attend us, in every circumstance and station, and every change of life. Not liable to any accident, to the devastations of time, or the ravages of any enemy. This we cannot say of any thing whatsoever which is external. Indeed nothing of that kind we can call our own. Untoward accidents, the hand of an enemy, or time, may deprive us of them; we may lose our capacities of, or our taste for, the fruition of them; and all our joys may be turned to sorrow; all our triumphant hopes and prospects into most painful disappointment. But grant they should remain in our possession till death, then we must bid them a long adieu; a painful one indeed, if the departing spirit hath no sources of enjoyment or happiness in itself.

SERMON.self. Thus it appears, that as the pleasures of the mind, especially those which attend virtue and religion, are the most excellent, the most our own, and ever endure; so, upon a comparison, are they far preferable to all other joys, even upon supposition, that the state of the soul which is expressed by *the loss* of it, and at the expence of which the happiness of an external kind was purchased and enjoyed, even upon supposition, I say, that this state had nothing of pain or anguish in it. In one word, the happiness of the good man, in the nature of things, and without any regard to a future judgment or state of retribution, is greater than that of a bad man: And wisdom would prefer the former to the latter: It must be so, if the objects of the good mans delight be really higher and more excellent, for upon this the whole argument chiefly turns. And I am persuaded the more we think of it, the more we shall be convinced that it is so, in the general state of things, and if we shall suppose the good and the bad equally liable to the common calamities of human life. If the question is put, what way shall I take to
make

make myself the most happy man I can SERM.
be in this world, wisdom will assuredly XII.
answer, be virtuous and good. Maintain
piety towards God, self-government and
discipline as nature directeth; Justice and
righteousness, charity and good-will to-
wards mankind; cultivate purity of man-
ners, meekness, humility, and content-
ment.

But this argument will appear in a far
stronger light, when it is considered what
is meant by the *loss of the soul*, and what
pains and sorrows attend this perdition.
These I have endeavoured in some mea-
sure to lay before you, in my last dis-
course upon this subject. The soul is not
lost to existence, but lost to happiness;
suffereth deeply in that anguish, which a
sense of guilt, of moral deformity and
vileness, giveth, by which a person be-
cometh utterly abhorrent and impatient
of himself; suffereth under a sense of di-
vine anger, and under all the positive
pains and penalties, which infinite wisdom
shall see fit to inflict, for the support of
God's moral government. Of the mis-
eries of this state the holy scriptures fix
neither limit, nor end. And if at this
price

SERMON. price men acquire the greatest possessions,
 XII. the whole world, were it possible, it would
 be indeed a dear purchase. *The world passeth away and the passion of it*; in a little time all is certainly gone; and the possession of it is succeeded by unutterable woe and distress. While men did possess the world, their joys were not unmixed with sorrows, sorrows perhaps deep and lasting; but the state of pain and misery into which they go, is represented as unmixed with joy. Desire was never satisfied upon earth, desire of what might render *being* happy; but *being* itself becometh, in a state of perdition, an intolerable burthen. Is this the state in which the possession of all the world, were it possible to gain it, shall end? into which the wisdom of this world leadeth men? Surely, then, that wisdom is folly, and these possessions are a curse and punishment.

But hitherto I have considered the whole of a man's possible acquisitions, were they all the world, laid in the balance with the perdition of his soul; and shewed that if he should gain the whole world and lose his soul, he must be an unspeakable loser. But our Sa-

viour's

viour's manner of speaking, and the connexion of these words with those which went before, leadeth us to consider the acquisition of the world as what is the cause of the loss of the soul. For saith he in the 25th verse, *for whatsoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it.* Now the meaning of this plainly is, that whosoever will save his life, by renouncing my cause, shall lose that life which is of the noblest kind; and whosoever will lose his life, that is, for my sake, and in support and defence of my cause, the same shall find life in the highest perfection of it. *Saving life* then, in that manner, is the cause of losing a nobler life, than that which is mortal. And losing mortal life in acting a right part, is the cause of finding life and immortality. And then immediately adds, *for what is, a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?* Intimating that it is such a gaining of the world, as causeth the loss of the soul; gaining it by giving up the cause of truth and of God; or gaining it by unrighteous methods, which will bring men to the same miserable issue of

SERMON of the present state. Gaining it, I say,
 XII by giving up the cause of truth and of
 God as the price of it. It was highly expedient that this matter should be set in a clear light, and often inculcated upon the disciples of our Saviour, for they were to be in such a state in this world, and engaged in such services, that if they proved faithful to him, who had called them, in performing their duty, they were likely to be great sufferers in their temporal interests: Persecution even to the death, and ill usage in all respects, was like to be their lot: And if indeed their hearts were set upon a prosperous state and a fortune in this world, it was extreme folly for them to assume the character of disciples of Christ. All prospects of this kind, therefore, they must needs give up; yet in doing so they would act a wise part, for they could be no gainers, if they made a fortune in this world, at the expence of losing their souls. But into this streight men are brought only in times of persecution for conscience sake. However, in times of peace and tranquillity men may hazard the loss of their souls in gaining this world, that is, when they
 pursue

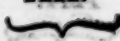
pursue it in the methods of unrighteous-
ness, fraud and deceit, or extortion, op-
pression, and violence. These must end
in the loss of the soul, and shew that the
gaining a fortune in this world, lieth near-
er their hearts than the rights of con-
science, and than life everlasting; and in-
deed such speak the same temper of mind,
with those whose who would give up the
cause of truth and of God for the sake of
temporal emolument.

S E R M.
XII.

But may not men in times of peace and
liberty, advance themselves in this world
consistently with their loyalty to God,
and the testimony of their own con-
sciences, and consistently with the perfor-
mance of all their duties to God and
man? Are not honest labour and industry,
frugality and temperance, prudence and
discretion, the direct way to prosperity
and wealth? It is plainly so. And there
is nothing in the constitution of the world,
or in the government of providence, which
entaileth poverty upon virtue. It is in-
deed just the reverse; for in the right hand
of wisdom is long life, and in her left hand,
riches and honour. But if these things be
so, then, when we are to form a judg-

SERM. ment by comparing temporal acquisitions

XII. with the life of the soul, and how little the gaining of the whole world, were that possible, signifies, if the soul is lost, we must deduct from the account, all temporal possessions, which may be acquired and enjoyed in perfect consistency with the life and salvation of the soul: And the true state of the case will be this, what profit is there in any acquisitions a man might gain, over and above what he may make in the ways of wisdom, and righteousness, if by these *he loses his own soul*? How inconsiderable indeed all the gain of injustice, oppression, or fraud, when laid in the ballance with the *loss* of the soul! It hath been shewn, that the acquisition of the whole world, if it could be compassed, is as nothing in this view; how much more may this be said, concerning any poor pittance which may be got by unrighteous methods, and little advantages which the man of craft and dishonesty hath over the righteous and good? And how infinitely absurd is it to hazard the loss of the soul upon account of them? Should a prosperous state in the world be utterly inconsistent with purity

of heart and life, and that a person, the SERM. moment he became a loyal subject of **XII.**  God's kingdom, must find himself in poverty and distress, which was the lot of the first disciples of Christ; yet true wisdom would direct him to make choice of that honest and safe poverty, by which the life of his soul would be ensured; and would pronounce him a fool, if he pursued after the world, and wealth, and greatness in it, at the hazard of his soul. Much more absurd the part, if he risques this hazard merely for what unrighteousness can promise him. But it must appear to be tedious to you to insist much upon an argument so plain and obvious, and that where the least attention is sufficient to fix conviction upon the mind.

But the plainer the truth in this great point is, and the more irresistible the evidence of it, the more wonderful it is that it hath so little influence upon mankind; and this is the first reflection I shall make upon the subject. Do we not see with what eagerness men pursue after acquisitions in this world, to the manifest hazard of their immortal spirits? Some in the worst methods, and so far as they

SERMON. can with impunity from human laws, going on, heedless of right and wrong, of honourable or base; thinking all well got that can be got with safety. Others, pursue the same end, perhaps with the same eagerness, but maintain such a regard to character and reputation, as is a check upon them; so that they will not do any thing, which is a plain violation of the laws of righteousness; but however, *Mammon* is the idol to which all their cares, their labours, and every thing in their power is sacrificed. The interests of the soul are intirely neglected; and from their temper, their conversation, and the strain of their conduct, one could not imagine that they had the least notion of any state of existence different from this. Such negligence of the soul and it's interests will prove as certainly fatal as the grossest deviations from the laws of righteousness. I do not say that the guilt contracted will be so great, or that the punishment in a future state will be so dreadful. But such a course of life will be as certainly *the loss of the soul*.

Where the spirit of the world hath possession and the government of the man

every thing truly great and generous, SERM.
 every thing sublime and holy, is banished. XII.
 The views and ends of action, the labours and the enjoyments of life, are all of a piece, all low and grovelling; there is no taste for things excellent; no aspiring of the soul after them. Good and worthy dispositions have no place, and what can the end of such a life be, but the outer darkness so often spoken of by our Saviour. There is no fitness for the heavenly world; there can be no title to it. For these reasons it will appear perfectly just, that our Saviour hath made the spirit of the world the standing and distinguishing character of those, who are utterly alienated from his religion, and who have no portion in him. It is the character of his disciples that *they are not of the world, even as he was not of it.* That have whatsoever they will in this world, and how much soever they possess, they are *poor in spirit*; they are so attuned as if they had little in this world, little or nothing to do with it; their great riches are in the mind, in the acquisitions of virtue, and a taste and relish for the pleasures of the world above.

SERM. But, whether by pursuing the world at
 XII. the expence of conscience, and violating
 the laws of righteousness, or at the expence of neglecting the culture of the soul intirely, so that it becometh incapable of that happiness which is intended for the children of wisdom; whether by the one or the other, men *lose their souls*; what doth it profit them if they should gain the whole world? As hath been said, how wonderful is it, that a matter so plain and so interesting should have so little influence upon mankind; and that so many are seen to act a part so little suitable to their frame as moral agents, as creatures accountable to God, and formed for an eternal duration of being, in which it shall be with them according to the temper and conduct they have maintained in this world; that so many pursue after the acquisitions of this world, with so much eagerness, while what is of infinitely greater importance, is utterly neglected!

The cause of this great evil, is our being so much engaged by things sensible and external; sensible objects get an early and easy possession of our minds, and they may be said to take fast hold of them.

Sensual

Sensual pleasure we become first acquainted with, and the appetites planted in us, and necessary in our constitution, are strong incentives to it: And those objects which make a great appearance in our imagination, as gayety of apparel, magnificence in building and furniture, and such things as these, by which men in the higher ranks of life are distinguished from others, and make a greater shew, are very apt to strike the fancy, so as to get possession of the heart; and may, by false associations of ideas, appear essential and fundamental to happiness. Thus sensible external objects solicit the mind, and naturally insinuate themselves into the heart; and on the other hand, as it requires some labour and abstraction of thought, to converse, and become familiar with insensible objects, they are apt to be greatly neglected, so that though they are as real as those which are sensible, and infinitely more important, yet they make no such impression. And indeed the engagement of the mind to them is not as much solicited, nor the inclinations towards them as strong. But, when we once become satisfied that this is the in-

SERM. firmity of our present state, and have de-

XII. monstrated to our own minds, that invifible objects are as real as thofe which are fenfible; how natural is it that we fhould labour to abftract the mind from fenfible objects; that we fhould check our ftrong inclinations to them; that we fhould, by frequently meditating upon them, endeavour to contract a familiarity with invifible things, and act, as being convinced that thefe are the moft, that thefe are the only, fubftantial things! O! of what advantage would it be to us to accustom our thoughts to thofe fubjects which become us as reasonable creatures, and who, when our prefent ftate cometh to a period, are to be inhabitants in the world of fpirits! In reality, fenfe has much too great a power over us; and it prevaileth at the expence of an unnatural depreflion of the power of reafon and faith. Therefore the utmoft pains ought to be taken in ftrengthening this fabled power, and vindicating it from the oppreffion of the other. For this great fervice to ourfelves we have indeed notable advantages from the religion of our Saviour; who hath given us the ftrongeft affurances, of
the

the reality of the invisible world, and hath SERM.
 taught us an utter contempt of this world, XII
 when compared to it; Who hath in his
 own person and life shewed us, that the
 very highest attainments of human nature,
 the noblest dignity, the most finished and
 compleat bliss, have no connection with
 it nor dependence upon it; and hath
 shewed us, that it was one great end of
 his coming into this world, that he might
 raise our hearts above it, and set them
 upon those things *which are above*. This
 is the design he most particularly pursu-
 ed. And pray observe how different the
 language of the Hebrew lawgiver is, with
 respect to the happiness of the obedient
 and faithful servants of God, and the re-
 ward they are to expect; from that of the
 blessed founder of the Christian Church.
 The former thus addresses the Jews, Deut.
 xxviii. 3. *blessed shalt thou be in the City,*
and blessed shalt thou be in the field; blessed
shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit
of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the
increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy
sheep; blessed shall be thy basket and thy store;
blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and
blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out;
the

SERM. the Lord shall cause thine enemies that rise
 XII. up against thee, to be smitten before thy face;
 they shall go out against thee one way, and
 flee before thee seven ways; declaring at
 the same time, that if they should be re-
 bellious against God, the very reverse of
 all these things should come upon them.
 But, the language of the great prophet
 and head of the Christian Church, is this,
 Matt. v. 3. &c. Blessed are the poor in spi-
 rit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven;
 blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be
 comforted; blessed are the meek, for they
 shall inherit the earth; blessed are they that
 hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they
 shall be filled; blessed are the merciful, for
 they shall obtain mercy; blessed are the pure
 in heart, for they shall see God; blessed are
 the peace makers, for they shall be called the
 children of God; blessed are they who are
 persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs
 is the kingdom of heaven. Again, to his
 disciples, Luke xxii. 28. Ye are they which
 have continued with me in my temptations,
 and I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my fa-
 ther hath appointed unto me, that you may
 eat and drink with me at my table in my king-
 dom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve
 tribes

tribes of Israel. And, again, Matt. xix. **SERM.**

28. Verily I say unto you that ye which have **XII.**

followed me, in the regeneration, when the son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel; and every one who hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my names sake, shall receive an hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life; and to add no more, Let not your hearts be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me; In my fathers house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you; I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.

John xiv. 1, &c.

S E R M O N

[316]

SERMON XIII.

The happiness which human nature, by its various powers and capacities, is made capable of enjoying in a state of perfection, which will be the portion of the righteous hereafter.

PSALM XXXVI. 8.

They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house, and thou shalt make them drink of the rivers of thy pleasure.

FROM the fifth verse of this psalm the author celebrateth the goodness and mercy of God, and shews the happiness of such as are the objects

objects of his favour. He does this in SERM.
very high strains. *Thy mercy, O Lord, is* **XIII.**
in the heavens, and thy faithfulness reacheth
unto the clouds; thy righteousness is like the
great mountains, intimating that it is firm
and stable, eminent and conspicuous; thy
judgments are a great depth. O Lord, thou
preservest man and beast. How excellent is
thy loving kindness, O God? therefore the
children of men put their trust under the sha-
dow of thy wings. And he shews that
the expectations of good men shall be
fully answered: they shall be abundantly sa-
tisfied with the fatness of thy house, and thou
shalt make them drink of the rivers of thy
pleasures. For with thee is the fountain of
life, in thy light shall we see light. God is
the fountain of all good, and from him
are all those favours derived which make
our present state comfortable, or which
are necessary to render our future state
happy. The promises which were given
to the Israelites, in the law of Moses, re-
lated all to temporal prosperity; and the
happiness they should enjoy in the land
of Canaan, upon condition of their obe-
dience, is much insisted upon. But in the
psalms, and the writings of the prophets,
scenes

SERM. scenes of another kind are opened; and

XIII. the promises of God to his servants mean something far above this world; even the blessings of a spiritual and an everlasting kingdom. It seems most probable, that these are what the psalmist intended, when he speaks of *being abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Gods house*; and says, *that with God is the fountain of life, and that in his light, his servants should see light*. Expressions which could not be so properly used with respect to any mere temporal prosperity. If we take the words of the Psalmist in this sense, his way of speaking in the 8th verse, which may be said to be truly sublime, giveth us very high ideas of the happiness of such as dwell in the house of God, and are the members of his family. *Thou shalt make them drink of the rivers of thy pleasures*. We have imagery of the same kind in the book of the Revelation, 22 Ch. i. v. *And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as chrystal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb: in the midst of the street of it and of either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit*

fruit every month, and the leaves of the tree **SERM.**
were for the healing of the nations. Imagine **XIII.**

a river for ever flowing with life and pleasure, and free access to all to drink of it abundantly, to drink life and joy; and we cannot have an higher representation of happiness; it is the richest abundance. We see indeed from innumerable things in the constitution of the intellectual and moral world, that it was our makers intention, his creatures should be happy, even to the utmost of their capacity and wish. But we need not go farther for a proof of this than the frame and constitution of our own minds. We see in all the powers and faculties of them so many inlets to pleasure and enjoyment; and though these excellent powers, by the corruption of them, lay us open to great wretchedness, yet when they are in a right state, they are a very noble possession, and yield very great joy; and surely the being who is the author of them intended this. Whoever hath attended to the past discourses upon the powers and affections of the soul, must have seen large proof of this: and what I intend in the present discourse is to illustrate

SERMON
XIII. illustrate this farther, by taking a general view of the mind in that state to which true religion raiseth it, and especially, in that state, where *that which is but in part shall be done away, and that which is perfect, shall come.* This will shew the value of the soul; and point out to Christians how worthy it was of the wisdom as well as goodness of our heavenly father, by the most extraordinary interposition that can be imagined, to provide for our salvation; and will naturally lead us to some reflections which are very suitable to the Lords Supper, the solemnity we are this day called to attend.

But before I enter upon these heads of discourse, I would say a few things concerning a power of the mind which has not yet been particularly noticed, and which seemeth to have been by our maker more peculiarly intended to be an inlet to pleasure and delight; for this is apparently the main end it serves; I mean the imagination. That power by which what is great, and wonderful, or lovely and beautiful, giveth us so much delight; by which the admired works of the architect, the painter, or statuary, so strike the mind;

mind; that faculty which hath a kind of creating power, and can form scenes to itself, of things which never had any real existence; scenes of joy or of horror. For as it is, when stored with pleasing images, a fountain of pure pleasure; so when images of dread and terror are drawn in it, it gives most exquisite pain. But in this respect it is like all the other powers and faculties of the mind, which, in a right and natural state, minister to our entertainment and pleasure; but when otherwise, are the sources of great misery. However, by the delight it is capable of ministering to us, and which it actually doth minister, we see what the wisdom and goodness of our maker intended by it. There is an obvious reason why I should not enter into a minute or particular detail of the pleasures of the imagination; it is enough to observe in general, that all are acquainted with that pleasure we have in seeing what is grand and majestic, what exciteth wonder and admiration in us, what is new, and what is in its kind beautiful; and all who think about such matters must be sensible, that the delight which such objects afford, must

Y be

SERMON. be in proportion to the delicacy of imagination. In this there is great variety of degree. No man but has some pleasure in viewing what is grand or wonderful; but it is very little pleasure which some have in this, compared to that of others. Where there is a delicate imagination and nicety of taste, persons have indeed very high delight. There is in truth such a thing as rapture in their surveying many of the works of nature, and of art. What art can do in the imitation of nature, or in imaginary scenes taken from nature, in the way of painting or statuary, affordeth very high entertainment to the discerning. But the unspeakably grand and beautiful works of nature itself afford what is much higher. The vast expanse of heaven, furnished as it is, so gloriously and with such beauty, must strike the imagination of every attentive beholder. The sun going forth in all his splendor and majesty, going forth, saith the Psalmist, *as a Bridegroom from his chamber, and as a strong man rejoiceth to run his race,* diffusing his light and heat over all the earth. The moon, again, which rules the night, and the stars of heaven. They

make this theatre indeed appear grand and glorious. Great is the design, wonderful the execution. But the world our eyes behold, is, very probably little to that which lies without our knowledge, especially when compared to the invisible, the world of spirits; of which we have but a very imperfect conception: Yet, from what we are taught in the holy scriptures, we must have very high sentiments concerning the multitude of inhabitants in it, the several orders of them; their glory, far exceeding what any mortal can be possessed of, or what any mortal can conceive. Is it not with great pleasure the imagination travels through these works, of the Creator? The flowers of the field, the sparkling gems which are dug out of the bowels of the earth, the birds of the air, the beasts of the field, give high entertainment to the curious and attentive observer; but what is any thing of this sort, when compared to the grandeur of the heavenly bodies, and that astonishing contrivance and power with which they are formed and governed? And what, again, is any, the most immense, greatness of any material frame, when compared to

SERM. the intellectual creation? To those hosts
 XIII. of heaven which probably exceed our
 thoughts and apprehensions as much in
 the glory as in the numbers of them? I
 mention these things, not as meaning at
 all to enumerate the pleasures of the ima-
 gination, but rather to explain what I
 mean; and your own enlargements upon
 these hints will abundantly convince you,
 that the imagination is capable of giving
 us very high entertainment. It is very
 true, as hath been said, it has this in com-
 mon with the other powers of the mind,
 that if it be not managed and improved
 in a proper manner, and if it is employed
 in creating images of horror, it will give
 most exquisite pain; but this can never
 be the original intention of the Author of
 nature. By the pleasure it is capable of
 affording, we see what it was intended
 for, and what, in a corrected state, and a
 well-disciplined mind, it will yield.

And this leads me to what I principally
 intended under this particular, namely,
 to lead your thoughts to that state, in
 which nature will be perfect in all the
 powers of it, and in this amongst the
 rest. What delight doth imagination, fine
 and

and delicate, when the mind is quite at ease, and susceptible of such entertainment, I say, what delight doth a delicate

SERM.
XIII.

imagination give us in our present state, in the contemplation of what is grand and beautiful, what is new and wondrous, and likewise in it's own productions! But think what this delight shall be, when this power shall be in the greatest perfection, and when an immensely great theatre lieth open to the entertainment of it. We have nor thoughts, nor words equal to this. And it is with a pleasing awe that we consider, how the vision of divine glory shall then affect the mind; a glory the sight of which no mortal can bear. A glory seen in its brightest effulgence, without any terror, and therefore unquestionably with the most extatic and rapturous delight and joy. No greatness, no majesty like this, therefore nothing so pleasing; pleasing but not overwhelming; as lovely and desireable, as great; raising and enlarging the soul, but causing no perturbation in it. And to add no more, this august scene which is so ravishing, will be new, and therefore must give all that delight which attendeth the contemplation

SERM. plation of what is so. In a word, an
 XIII. imagination the most delicate and susceptible of pleasure, surveying such a scene as this, must yield extatic joy. But from this very general account we may see what our maker intended for us, when he endowed us with such a wondrous faculty as this; we might conceive *understanding, will and affections*, combined together in the human mind without any such power; and in fact, we meet with instances in the human race, where there is little of it to be found; men who seem to be in a great measure strangers to delicacy of imagination and taste; but such minds are in a state which we cannot but account very imperfect. How kind was our maker to enrich our frame with such a faculty, as an inexhaustible spring of joy and delight to us! A delight which may indeed be called pure, and in which it may be truly said there can be no excess. But having thus spoken particularly concerning the principal faculties of the human soul; let us now take a view of the system in general, and we must see that it is excellent, and was contrived

contrived as a seat of the purest happiness and enjoyment. SERM.
XIII.

But surely we are not to form our judgment of this excellent work of our maker from a state of it, in which it is corrupted and depraved, a state, in which, the most wonderful and curious work of God in this world becometh most loathsome and abominable, a state, to which as a created, a finite, and a changeable being, it must in it's nature be liable. We find that creatures of an order far higher than the soul of man, were liable to degeneracy and corruption, and many of them actually lost their innocence and original glory, and fell into the most deplorable state. I say, we must not form our judgment concerning the human soul from a state of degeneracy and moral pollution, which rendereth it abominable. A state of ignorance and darkness in the understanding, in which vile prejudices prevail; in which the light, which God originally gave men to direct their way, is become darkness; in which the *will* is not amenable to the laws of reason, nor will hear the voice of conscience, but is perversely and obstinately set upon follow-

SERM.ing the devices of a bad heart ; in which

XIII. the affections are all out of order, and no subordination and harmony found among them ; in which, furious passions, like a whirlwind, drive off all that standeth in their way ; in which, self is the governing principle, and every thing great and generous is banished ; in which, conscience is dethroned, and the sense of right and wrong, in a great measure, lost to the true purposes of it ; so that the greatest glory of the human frame is extinguished ; in which, the whole soul becometh disorder and confusion, and at the same time liable to the greatest misery, from the evil effects of vice, from the opposition of lusts warring in the soul, from the pains of a condemning conscience, and from the terrible apprehensions of God's anger and indignation. In such a state are many found ; and, indeed, when men become utterly abandoned, and capable of the very worst things, nothing in this world is so hateful.

But informing our judgments of this glorious production of the wisdom and goodness of God, let us attend to what he made, and plainly designed it for ; let us attend

attend to what, by the means of virtuous SERM.
and religious discipline, with the concur- XIII.
rence of the grace of God, it may be
brought to, even in this world ; but es-
pecially, let us attend to the appearance
it shall make in a state above all moral
imperfection and infirmity. Whatever ad-
vancement in happiness the human mind
can attain to, the foundation of it was
intirely laid in the powers and faculties
with which God endowed us in our first
frame ; whatever we shall possess through
an eternal duration of being, he confer-
red on us at first, when he gave us to be
men ; and therefore it is but just, to esti-
mate his original work according to the
value to which it may be raised and
improved. Let us suppose, then, the
understanding enlightened with all that
knowledge and wisdom which is neces-
sary for ordering the conduct of life a-
right, as the effect of an inquiry after
truth and duty, carried on with fairness
of mind, and free from corrupt prejudice
and partiality, and in which men are
perfectly willing to learn the truth, whe-
ther it be agreeable to the present in-
clinations or not ; pursuing that, and that
only,

SERM. only, with simplicity of spirit, so far as
XIII. they can know their own spirits. Suppose conscience, in it's proper power and strength, and in pursuance of right judgment and sound knowledge, directing the conduct, exerting a supreme authority, and allowing no contradiction to it's commands; which therefore are submitted to, though inclination or interest should in some instances loudly reclaim; supposing the *will*, under this supreme director, right in it's decrees, if I may call them so; nothing obstinate or perverse, or forward in it, but amenable to the laws of righteousness. I imagine, again, the affections all in a beautiful order, strong enough to serve the purposes of private and of public happiness, the great ends of self-love and good-will, but no vehemencies or storms of passion allowed, and all under proper restraint, capable therefore of giving high pleasure, but not occasioning any confusion, or any pain but what is necessary, that the ends of them may be served; and thus the whole man disposed to act the part of a man, and appearing with that dignity and honour which becometh such an order of being,

being, and the lord of this sublunary creation. SERM.
XIII.

In this view it will be readily allowed that he is of an excellent frame, and that the appearance is indeed lovely. We cannot consider it without admiring and being pleased: and God hath endowed us with a sense of excellency by which we are to judge of this, and to which the holy scriptures often appeal as a standard. We find in reflecting upon this excellency in the human frame, there is great satisfaction. We cannot but be pleased with existence in such an order of being, and account it a most invaluable gift. Lower we are indeed, unspeakably lower, than some orders in the creation of God, of which the scriptures give us an idea; but vastly raised above all the *brutal* orders; and what we are, and what we hope for, may very justly give great delight.

As reflecting upon the excellency of our frame giveth high satisfaction, which it is not only innocent but virtuous to indulge, so when we survey the particular parts and members of this wondrous system,

SERMON. system, we shall see that there is not one
 XIII. of them but what, in a right state of the
 mind, tends to our happiness, either as a
 preservative from evil, or as a source of
 pleasure; not one of them: so that the
 kindness of our maker appeareth in our
 whole frame, and that he intended we
 should have a most pleasing enjoyment of
 the being which, by his sovereign authority,
 he hath given us. The slightest view
 of the several powers and affections of
 the mind, will satisfy us of this. How
 pleasing are the acquisitions of the understanding
 in knowledge! what a rich reward,
 are they accounted, of all the labours
 which are bestowed in them! what satisfaction
 is there in that dominion a person hath in,
 and over himself, by means of that freedom
 of *will*, of which nothing can deprive him!
 and by which all his actions are properly
 his own. Attend to the appetites which are
 planted in us, and all the affections; you see,
 in a right state of the mind, that they are so
 many different springs of joy: especially the
 social affections, by which we are connected
 with a public, with a country; the
 affections

affections which are suited to the relations SERM.
of domestic life, and to that of sacred XIII.
friendship. These affections are in them-

selves lovely, the exercise of them delightful, the monuments raised by them always pleasing to the reflecting thoughts. But above all, those joys which spring from an approving conscience, which are indeed the highest of human life. These crown the happiness of man, and are a noble part of that reward which God hath annexed to the practice of virtue. The person of worth finds joy in every good action, and joy in reflecting upon it. It is evident from all this, that our maker intended to make us excellent, and to make us happy. Nor ought it to be objected against this, that often these powers and affections, which have been mentioned, are the sources of great pain and sorrow. No doubt this is true, but all know and will own, that this is owing to the corruption of them, and the moral infirmity of the mind. It is not a thing necessary, but accidental, by the abuse of our powers: to sin it is owing that we know so little substantial joy and pleasure,
and

SERM.

XIII.

and suffer so great and various evil. Sin is that which dimmeth and obscureth the excellency and glory of human nature, and turneth it into shame. But we look for a state in which sin shall have no place. In the present state, notwithstanding all the labours of our discipline, we come short of that standard of perfection which God hath planted in every man, as that, at which he should constantly aim. He that hath got the highest, is still inferior to what he ought to be, and findeth reason to complain. But in the eternal age, things in this respect will wear another face. Human nature, free from moral infirmity, will be perfect in all its powers, open to the streams of purest joy at every inlet, and knowing nothing that giveth sorrow or pain; when moral perfection and happiness, which the God of nature hath connected together, shall, in inseparable conjunction, be enjoyed in the highest relishes of them, every creature receiving from the fountain of life to the utmost of his enlarged capacity. To such an issue will the father of mercies conduct the affairs of his servants at last.

But

But when we consider the high excellency and value of the human soul, this naturally leadeth our thoughts to what the father of all hath done for our redemption from a state of guilt and misery, and to raise us to the enjoyment of that happiness of which he hath made us capable. He hath interposed, in a manner the most extraordinary which can enter into the human imagination, by sending his only begotten son into the world, and giving him up to the death for us all. But when we consider the excellency of the human soul, the happiness of which it is capable, and the misery that had been entailed upon it by corruption and guilt, we shall not wonder that the wisdom of God should interpose for the redemption of it, in any manner, by which that should be most effectually accomplished. If indeed the father of mercies hath a desire to the works of his hands, no work of his in this world was so much to be regarded as mankind; nothing of so great importance in the creation. It is the value and excellency of the human soul which justifieth the wisdom of such an interposition.

S E R M.
XIII.

SERM. tion as that of the son of God, crucified
XIII. and slain for us. As, on the one hand,
 we are assured that God doth nothing in
 vain, and that there must be in the end
 he hath in view, an importance, which is
 in proportion to the means which he
 useth to serve it; which indeed giveth us
 an exceeding high idea of the value of
 the human soul, when such a method is
 taken for the redemption and recovery
 of it; so, on the other hand, when we
 look into the value of the human im-
 mortal spirit, and the excellency of the
 workmanship, we cannot but see that
 there is an end worthy of the means.
 While we adore the infinite goodness of
 God, manifested in this great work of re-
 demption, we see at the same time what
 perfectly approveth the wisdom of it.
 The mind rests, with wonderful satisfac-
 tion, in the notice taken of the human
 kind in the creation of God; and this is
 a notice not at all capricious and with-
 out reason; but, in truth, suitable to the
 station and rank it holds in the works
 of God, and to the excellencies of the
 human immortal spirit. And though we
 ought

ought to be deeply humbled, and to think meanly of ourselves, as guilty creatures; yet we err, if we think at all meanly concerning our souls as the offspring of the supreme being. Whatever we have made ourselves, yet surely God hath made us originally of such importance, as to justify the wisdom of all that attention which he hath given to us, and that care, which he hath taken of us. As the gift of Christ, and what he hath done and suffered for us, is the mirror in which the goodness of God most gloriously shineth, so it does most affectingly display the worth and excellency of the human soul. I shall conclude with some observations which I hope may be useful, and tend to raise in us becoming sentiments as the redeemed of the Lord.

First, let us consider, that every individual hath a very noble possession given him in the possession of himself. It is a possession which he holdeth for ever by the surest tenure. It is capable of the greatest and most valuable improvement: And when men have attained to that improvement, they must find themselves extremely happy. Let us, therefore, be con-

SERMON. tent with our state as men. We may
 XIII. be in heaviness at present, if need be, by
 manifold temptations, afflictions, in our bodies, circumstances, relatives, may be very heavy; still we continue the offspring of God; still we are possessed of the spark of immortal life which we have from heaven; still we have the excellent powers of our minds. Is not a foundation laid here for contentment and tranquillity of mind? Whatever is merely external, and liable to time, and chance, or adverse events, has not, cannot have, a very near relation to mind. Prosperity in the outward estate doth not make it more excellent or worthy; adversity in the outward state doth not render it less excellent and worthy; if enjoyment and happiness of the highest kind are supposed to wait upon excellency and worth, and bear a proportion to it, that kind of happiness is not at all measured by the external state. And let it be observed, that all the care and pains taken about the outward state, however natural, however necessary, and even virtuous and most commendable, yet terminates in mortal life, as the great end of it; the support
 of

of life, conveniencies and comforts, and dignity and decency, in it. And if this be all, as evidently it is, then surely these ought not to be our chief cares; but such things as relate intimately to the man, that is, the immortal spirit. The attaining to sound knowledge, and discernment between truth and falsehood, between expedient and inexpedient, between right and wrong; attaining to a right state of the heart and affections, that they may be set upon their proper objects, and in their proper order; attaining to self government, by which the whole soul shall be subjected to conscience; and in consequence of all this, to such a fixed and permanent relish of things celestial, as shall make them to us infinitely preferable to all things upon earth. When the man is thus disciplined and improved, he is to himself a most valuable possession, and in which there is reason in every state to be content. Thus a good man, as Solomon speaketh, may be supposed to *be satisfied from himself*. And, indeed, if there is no such satisfaction from within, there is but little consideration to be had of what is from

SERM. without. It may be truly said to be va-

XIII.

ity. And when life cometh to a period, this will appear to all. But the person enriched with good affections carrieth his treasures along with him, and shall flourish, as in eternal youth, so in eternal bliss.

Secondly, We may see, that the high strains in which the goodness of God, and his unchangeable disposition to communicate perfection and happiness, are celebrated in the holy scriptures, are not at all romantic, or without reason and reality. In him is the *fountain of life*, from him as the *inexhaustible fountain*, *rivers of pleasures* eternally flow; and you may see he has so made us, that every power and faculty, and every affection of the soul, is an inlet to that pure and substantial pleasure. This you see is evidently the case. As if the thirsty and parched body were made to drink of the refreshing stream at every pore, so the mind is made to drink of pleasure by every faculty. Did not the being that made us so, intend that we should be full of bliss? Does not our wondrous frame evidently speak this? How then ought

we

we to rejoice at the goodness of our heavenly Father? *A river of pleasure!* How great the idea? But far from being greater than the reality. And here I cannot avoid taking notice of the vast difference there is between the provision made for human happiness, properly speaking, and for the pleasure of meer animal life; that pleasure, I mean, which is entirely sensual. This is confined to the few senses, lieth in a very narrow compass, and in the gratification of a very few appetites, which the brutal orders have as well as the human kind. But the inlets to the happiness and pleasures of the man are much more in number, and more various; and as the happiness intended for him is of an higher kind than any of the brutal orders can taste, so it is unspeakably greater with respect to the variety of it. But let all our meditations and reflections of this kind terminate in the blessed original infinite goodness, and those high praises which are so justly due to it.

And lastly, let us remember him, with the utmost gratitude, who hath, at the expence of the greatest sufferings to himself, executed the counsels of divine goodness.

SERMONS towards us ; Him, in whom all the
XIII. father shineth ; him, *whose glory we have
 beheld as the glory of the only begotten of the
 father full of grace and truth.* In whom,
 we, with open face beholding as in a glass the
 glory of the Lord, are changed from glory to
 glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord.

SERMON XIV.

The greatness of God and his works, his universal providence, and the happiness he must enjoy from the execution of the glorious design.

ISAIAH XL. 15.

Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as a small dust of the balance; behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing. And Lebanon is not sufficient to burn; nor the beasts thereof sufficient for a burnt offering. All nations before him are as nothing, and they are counted to him less than nothing and vanity.

FROM the 12th verse, the prophet entereth upon a representation of the greatness and power of the true God, and of the vanity of the Gods of the nations when compared

SERM. to him; which subject he pursueth to the
XIV. end of this chapter, and in the greatest

part of the following; and indeed the prophet speaketh in strains suitable to his subject. *Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand? And meted out heaven with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a ballance? Who hath directed the spirit of the Lord, or being his Counsellor hath taught him? With whom took He counsel, and who instructed him? And taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and shewed him the way of understanding? Again, 18th verse, To whom will ye liken God, or what likeness will ye compare unto him? The workman maketh a graven image; and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold; and casteth silver chains. He that is so impoverished that he hath no oblation; chooseth a tree that will not rot, He seeketh unto him a cunning workman to prepare a graven image, that shall not be moved. Have ye not known? Have ye not heard? Hath it not been told you from the beginning? Have ye not understood from the foundations of the earth? It is He that sitteth upon the circle of*

the earth; and the inhabitants thereof are as *SERM.*
 grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens *XIV.*

as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in; that bringeth the princes to nothing; he maketh the judges of the earth as vanity. Again, 28th verse, *Hast thou not known? Hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not nor is weary? There is no searching of his understanding.* Such language and expression become the majesty of the true God. This is a subject of meditation which must be always pleasing to well-disposed minds; and, as I shall endeavour in this discourse to shew you, is exceedingly useful. In my text, all the nations upon earth are represented as a drop of a bucket, and are accounted as the small dust of the ballance; things of no account or estimation, and not at all regarded. What is one drop of the bucket, or the small dust of the ballance? So inconsiderable, that the ballance is not in the least affected by it. Nay, all nations are as nothing, and they are counted to him less than nothing, if any thing could be less, and vanity. Poor mortals speak of the greatness of princes and

SERM. and empires in very lofty expressions, according to their measures, and their imaginations; but what are they to him? What to his majesty and greatness, to whom the whole expanse of heaven is only as a curtain and a tent to dwell in? Let us particularly consider this. What are all the nations upon this globe, what this globe itself, when compared with the greatness of the works of God in this universe? nay, what, when compared even with this one solar system of ours? I mean our sun, and the planets which move regularly around him. But what, again, is this system, what the sun with all the planets which attend him, when compared with the vastness of those works which fall under even our notice? What a little thing is our whole system when considered in this view? So little, that were it entirely annihilated, to speak so, in the works of the supreme being, it would hardly be missed. Supposing the fixed stars be each a center of such a system, how great the number and how magnificent the frame? But still farther, how little is all which we can comprehend of the works of God, when compared

pared with immensity of space ; a thing without any possible limit or bound, the dimensions of which, numbers added to one another without end, can never equal. I say, how inconsiderable all the works of God, that we know any thing of, when compared with this immensity, and that *being* who is every where in immense space, and who fills it. Here our thoughts are lost. *Who can by searching find out God, who can find out the Almighty unto perfection?* But if what we know of the works of God, be indeed as nothing to immensity ; and yet any particular system around us, is but an inconsiderable thing, when compared to that part of the works of God which falleth under our notice, and observation ; and our little world but little considerable, when compared with the intire system of which it is a part ; then surely may it be truly said, that the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and accounted as the small dust of the ballance. They are as nothing, less than nothing, and vanity. Considered in this light, what are the conquests of a *Nimrod*, or *Nebuchadnezzar*, a *Cyrus*, an *Alexander*, or a *Cesar*? Nay, what

SERM.

XIV.

SERM. what is *Europe* or *Asia*, *Africa* and *A-*
 XIV. *merica*, though, were the thing possible,
 they were all united in one empire, and
 subjected to one power? quite incon-
 siderable indeed and less than nothing.
 To say all at once, in the immensity
 of space there is infinite capacity of re-
 ceiving being; and in omnipotent power
 there is an infinite capacity of producing
 it. This is the utmost length that human
 imagination can go. And if this is the
 case, who can possibly set any limit to
 the works of God? Well may it be said,
 that *he taketh up the isles as a very little*
thing. Well may it be said, that, to suit
 his greatness, the forests of Lebanon are
not sufficient to burn, nor the beasts thereof
sufficient for a burnt-offering. But all which
 hath been hitherto said respecteth only the
 material world; this is indeed the lowest
 and least significant work of God; and
 which we could not imagine would have
 been brought into existence at all, but for
 the sake of the world of life. In a living
 creature we see more excellency than in
 any possible mass, however extended, of
 meer dead matter. But when the mind
 turns to the contemplation of the world
 of

of life, the thoughts are immediately cal-
 led off from the inferior brutal creation,
 to the higher orders, who are endowed
 with intellectual, especially with moral
 powers. Of this kind, though in the
 lowest rank, is the human race, to whom
 this little globe is given for an habitation.
 How vast their numbers in our age, upon
 the face of the earth, or who live upon
 the waters! How much greater the num-
 bers, who have existed in all ages, from
 the beginning, and who shall come into
 existence to the end of the world! And
 what shall we say concerning all the worlds
 which God hath made? Are they with-
 out life, without inhabitants, without
 inhabitants of the rational and moral
 kind? No, surely. How inexpressible
 then the number of them! How great
 that family of God! Who can number his
 hosts? But we have reason to think, and
 the holy scriptures have taught us, that
 there are orders of being far higher than
 those which are so connected with mat-
 ter, as the human mind is; pure spirits,
 probably not having their habitation fixed
 in any one material system, any one planet
 or world, but rather having all the vast-
 ness

SERM. nefs of the universe for their abode, in
 XIV. which they execute the divine commands.

Of these the holy scriptures speak, as being in vast numbers, *thousands of thousands minister unto him, ten thousand times ten thousand stand before him.* Dan. vii. 10. Who can say what an host that may be? Who can say what numbers of such, through the whole universe? We cannot but think of it as vast, since these are the most excellent creatures, and in whom the Creator most delighteth; and we are sure, that the production of an Angel, is as easy to omnipotence, as the forming the very lowest creature. This wonderfully raises the imagination concerning the number of the *divine armies*, as the scriptures speak. But then we see, in the orders of being which God hath made, a gradation from lower to higher, from less excellent to more excellent and perfect. And as we are taught that the angels are a more excellent order than the human kind, so we are taught that in the world of spirits there are orders rising above one another. Thus we read of archangels, of thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers. Nor is there any thing

thing to hinder our conceiving, that some orders of angels are as much exalted above others, in their powers, and in their station, as the lower orders are exalted above the human kind. But how high the gradation may go, who can tell? As in considering the extent of the material world, immensity lay before us, so here infinity lies before us. Infinite the distance, between any supposed degree of power and perfection, which we know to be actually communicated, and the supreme, absolute and independent perfection: And how high in this scale, to which imagination itself cannot fix a certain limit, some creatures may be exalted, who can tell? Or what numbers of them? However, all these, throughout the universe, whatever their numbers, whatever their excellency, are the family of God; they are his ministry and servants. In this view of things, what and how utterly inconsiderable is the human kind? Surely *all nations are indeed as the drop of the bucket, or the small dust of the ballance*; the influence of which is not in the least perceptible. *The inhabitants of the earth are in truth as grasshoppers.* O! Who can speak the greatness of this being?

SERM
XIV.

being? The greatness of his works? What is the son of man who is a worm? Who, one would think, might be intirely neglected, and lost in the works of God.

But it is not so. For in the second place, God constantly governeth the world which he hath made. And as all creatures from the highest to the lowest, have their subsistence in the power of God; so they are each of them noticed by his eye and governed by his providence; that is, by the immediate energy of his own power, or by agents which are under his direction, and who cannot act but by his power. It is pleasing to a good mind, to think that this great article of our faith is established, and confirmed, by the best and highest improvements which have been made in reason, and the knowledge and study of nature; and that those who understand most, and have made the greatest progress in their enquiries, ascribe activity only to mind, as that in which matter hath no share; making it apparent, that to speak of the powers of matter, and of a necessity under which they are, or a chance by which changes are produced in it, is a language which really hath

hath no meaning at all. God reigneth ; **SERM**
in his infinite mind, the plan of this uni- **XIV.**
verse was formed ; by his power the glo-
rious design was carried into execution.
He regulates all causes, and all effects, and
will never cease to take care of the world
which he has made. But we evidently
see there are certain fixed rules and mea-
sures by which the energy of the supreme
being is exerted ; these we commonly call
the laws of nature ; for example, bodies
being carried towards centers, and moving
slower or faster as they are more or less
distant from these ; that waters should
run down, that vapours should ascend ;
that we should have summer and winter,
spring and harvest ; that the earth should
bring forth vegetables, and that men
should reap from it the same kind they
sow ; that animals shou'd be dependent
upon food for nourishment, and that
their offspring should be of the same
species with themselves : And so in innu-
merable instances. It is plain there is
a necessity that these things should be all
regulated according to a stated course
and order, or the world would be utter
A a confusion,

SERM. confusion, and we should not at all know
 XIV. how to conduct ourselves.

Now, that care of the supreme being, by which this general order or stated course of things is preserved, may not unfitly be called a general providence: And it will not be amiss to consider more particularly the great extent of it. It taketh place not only in the frame of the universe, the regular motion of the vast bodies which compose it, by which we have spring and harvest, summer and winter, day and night; not only in the fruitfulness of the earth, and the state of the several kinds of animals which inhabit it, and the manner in which the kinds and the individuals are preserved; but in human affairs likewise; we know that wholesome food will nourish us, and that poison will destroy us; and we know too, *that the hand of the diligent maketh rich, and that want is like to come upon the sluggard as an armed man.* Again, where we see a man temperate, honest, and just, kind, and benevolent, we expect, that if some particular cause do not obstruct it, he will enjoy health, esteem in his neighbourhood, and have a peaceful possession
 of

of himself. Where, on the contrary, we see luxury and vice prevail, where we see men unrighteous, cruel and perfidious, and of malevolent spirits, we conclude such men will be the aversion of the neighbourhood, that they will suffer deeply in their health and in their minds, and become very miserable. This is the tendency of their conduct, according to the established course of things which the supreme being hath fixed, and will maintain. In these respects, *as a man soweth so he shall reap.* The same wisdom, which hath appointed an order of nature in the material world, hath established an order of causes and effects in human affairs, according to which we see things generally go on. But it is particularly pleasing to observe, how minutely this providence of the supreme being descendeth, even to the notice and direction of the smallest and most inconsiderable things. Our Saviour, and this according to the justest philosophy that ever appeared in the world, representeth his heavenly father as clothing the lillies of the field, and as feeding the ravens; as doing this as with his own hand; and he teacheth, that a sparrow

SERM. cannot fall to the ground without his
 XIV. providence; and argues from this, that if

~~~~~ he attends to these things, which are comparatively of the smallest account, surely his providence will not neglect his creatures of a nobler order; *Fear not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.* And he tells his disciples *that the very hairs of their heads were all numbered.* Luke xii. 7.

Thus, tho' God is so great, *He humbleth himself to behold things which are done in heaven and upon earth,* and takes notice even of the lowest orders of creatures, and of every individual. For, besides that general order of causes and effects which he hath established, and maintaineth from age to age, there are plain footsteps of a particular providence regarding individual persons; by which I mean his notice and care of individuals, considered as such; his pursuing particular intentions concerning them, and bringing to pass events respecting them, which are the effects of a special determination, and volition of his, and different from the general course of things; seeing that might have been carried  
 on,

on, without any such determinations concerning the individual, or any of those events which come to pass in pursuance of them. Thus, God so ordered it, that *Moses*, instead of being cast into the river to perish, should be laid amongst the flags upon the brink of it; and that *Pharaoh's* daughter should be the first that found and took notice of him. So, again, by an occurrence merely accidental, or by a sudden thought, of the rise of which no account is to be given, a person may be diverted from taking passage in a ship which perisheth in the voyage; or by some accidental thought, or accidental event, one may be directed to go out of an house, the minute before it falls. A thousand such instances may be suggested, in which things take turns quite unaccountable and unexpected, upon which very important events may depend; and what is here said concerning individual persons may be applied to families and kingdoms, in which God is the supreme ruler. By the interpositions of providence things are so governed and conducted that his purposes are pursued and carried into execution; and manifold are the means

A a 3.

by

SERM. by which this may be effected. How

XIV.  things which appear to us purely accidental! How many which are owing to thoughts and counsels suggested to the heart of man, in all which God presides! Every man must be sensible that many thoughts have come into his mind without his seeking, and when he was not at all attending to the subject of them, upon which perhaps very important consequences have followed; not to speak of the inspiration of the Almighty, in the strict and proper sense of that word, which is an interposition of quite a different kind from that now mentioned. *Solomon* was so full of this argument, that he tells us, *Eccles. ix. 11. The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, nor bread to the wise, nor riches to men of understanding, nor favour to men of skill, but time and chance happeneth to all men.* But especially when we consider a moral government constantly exercised by the supreme being over moral agents, it is unquestionable that there must be, by the supreme ruler, a particular notice of individuals; and that as he appointeth to each his discipline,



discipline, so he is pleased or displeased S. F. R. M. with his conduct; and accordingly will XIV. interpose to testify this by suitable rewards or punishments. And here no general rules will hold, for every individual *must bear his own burthen*, and the things concerning him be adjusted and adapted to his state and conduct.

I have more largely insisted on all this, to shew that, though the works of God are so vast, beyond all our imaginations, yet there is no reason to apprehend that the least creature is neglected by his providence. His eye is every where upon every creature; and every object whatsoever as much attended to, as if there were no other object besides to engage attention. *Such knowledge is too wonderful for us.* We can have no idea of such infinite comprehension of mind; but we see it is, and must be in the governor of the universe; and to think of him, comprehending in one view all objects throughout the immensity of space, attending to, and governing all, without difficulty, without labour, without any confusion, who, but must be disposed to adore? Who, but

SERM. must feel in his mind the very highest veneration? But, in the

Third place, These reflections upon the greatness of God and of his works, which are the production of such wisdom, and power, and goodness, (indeed, it is this last which gave birth to the design,) naturally lead our thoughts to a subject great and pleasing; namely, the happiness of the supreme being in his perfections and works, a subject, indeed, as little to be comprehended by us, as we can find out the Almighty unto perfection. Yet we cannot avoid the thought, how high, and in all respects perfect, the felicity of the first cause of all things must be; and love to God will make a right heart rejoice and exult in it. The holy scriptures represent him as *rejoicing* in all his works, and it is the most natural representation which can be; and the author of the history of the creation tells us, *that God looked upon his works, and they were all very good*; they answered his intention, and they were the objects of his approbation. They are indeed worthy of him; great beyond expression, and excellent. They display his glory in a manner that must for ever

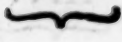
amaze

amaze the whole intellectual creation. S E R M.  
 But who can conceive the pleasure, if XIV.  
 such a word may be used, which the  
 creating and governing mind must have in  
 them; in works so grand so beautiful;  
 and in which his most glorious design is  
 crowned with unfailing success. As we  
 have no other way of rising to any idea  
 of the divine perfections, but by attend-  
 ing to the powers and faculties of our  
 own minds, and what passeth in them;  
 so we have no other way of framing any  
 idea of the divine felicity. And we can-  
 not err in ascribing to him what we call  
 happiness, when it is evident what we  
 ascribe to him, is of such a nature as not  
 to be incompatible with his perfections.  
 Now, we know, that when a moral agent  
 hath done an action wise and good, he  
 hath much pleasure in reflecting upon it,  
 and the principles and motives from which  
 it sprung; and if he has success attending  
 his endeavours, and events answer to his  
 desire, he hath a great additional joy.  
 Should we suppose him to pursue a course  
 of such good and successful actions through  
 life, without once erring, or being un-  
 happy in the event, he must have an en-  
 joyment

**SERM.** joyment of himself that may be said to  
**XIV.** be compleat, and with which, in truth,  
pleasure of any other kind can hardly be compared. But should we suppose him in a station and circumstances, in which his good spirit and good actions gave happiness, not only to his relatives, and those who are about him, but to all the neighbourhood, his satisfaction, in being the instrument, in the hand of providence, to communicate such happiness, must be still greater.

To proceed, suppose him, with such a spirit, at the head of a great empire or kingdom, making thousands and ten thousands happy, without once erring in any one step of his administration; how joyful and pleasing must his reflections be! Much more, if he could, like the light of the sun, diffuse joy and blessedness over the whole face of the earth! But may we not raise our views to higher orders of being? Suppose an angelic power endowed with abilities to preside over a world or a system, as the servant and minister of divine power, and acting his part always aright, always with success, and rejoicing in the constant gratification of the noblest affections;



affections; how happy must he be! But S E R M.  
 what is all this to divine felicity, in the **XIV.**  
 enjoyment of divine absolute perfections,   
 and all the glorious productions of them? God seeth the immense theatre of this universe, of his own production, the contrivance of his wisdom, and the work of his power. He sees it beautiful as grand, and the most perfect symmetry and harmony in it. He sees every part answering the original design; he sees it shall continue to do this to eternity. How must he rejoice, as the sole voluntary cause of all this glorious production! Especially, in those multitudes of moral agents, that are capable of bearing a resemblance of himself, and of tasting high happiness, indeed an happiness which, in kind, may properly be said to be like his own! How must he rejoice in these!

Nor let it be objected, that in the universe there is much irregularity, and many evils and sufferings. For what to us hath the appearance of irregularity, may be, nay, I may say assuredly is, necessary to the harmony of the whole; and part of a design, which was the best and worthiest which could be framed. As for those sufferings

SERM. ferings which the subjects of a moral government bring upon themselves, they  
 XIV. are as necessary as that government itself; which is indeed the glory of God's creation, and without which, and those orders of creatures, which are made to be the subjects of such a government, the universe must have been nothing to what it is now. An universe without angels, without men, without any such orders of intellectual and moral beings, what would it have been? But the glorious head and regent of that vast body, which is all harmony, all order and beauty, and in which no part of the grand design hath failed, or ever can fail, what happiness must he taste! May we ascribe to him what we call joy? His joy must be most perfect and compleat. To these observations, the grand representation of the prophet, in the words of my text, naturally lead our thoughts; and I shall now conclude the discourse with some reflections which are of a practical nature.

First, if our minds are rightly impressed with a sense of the divine greatness and majesty, how little must what we are apt to call great upon earth appear in  
 our

eye! How little considerable those distinctions upon which some are so apt to value themselves above others! Distinc-  
SERM.  
XIV.

tions of parentage and birth, of station, of wealth and lustre; all of which do really sink into nothing in our eye!

We speak of great kings, great empires, great ministers of state, great armies; alas! Are not all nations before God, *as the drop of the bucket, and the small dust of the ballance; less than nothing and vanity?*

Indeed, the distinction of station and power God hath originally intended, and by his providence maintaineth. And it is necessary for the order and well-being of human society, that a proper regard should be had to them. But it is too common a thing, and which indeed speaketh a kind of littleness of mind, to value them too highly; it speaks such a littleness in the possessor, who valueth himself highly upon them, and likewise in those who pay the extravagant regard to him which he expecteth. And this is an infirmity that, in truth, is productive of much evil, and is the source of that adulation of the great, which is one of the most mischievous of all things. It will be a noble preservative  
from

SERM. from this vice, to preserve upon the mind

XIV. just impressions of the divine greatness, and of how little account all such distinctions are, when compared to it. They will, indeed, viewed in this point of light, almost quite vanish. When we have learned to pay that regard to the supreme being which is infinitely due to him, then we shall learn to pay a proper regard to the stations and powers by which any of our fellow mortals are distinguished. External appearances will not greatly move us: and the greatest will no otherwise be regarded than as men; of whom *Job xxv. 6. saith, What is man, who is a worm, and the son of man who is but as a worm? whose pomp and glory will soon fade and die. His breath goeth out, he returneth to his earth, and that very day his thoughts perish. Psalm cxlvi. 4.*

Secondly, Let us in all things meekly and affectionately submit to the supreme ruler; in humble obedience to his laws, and in unreserved resignation to his providence. Who are we that we should rebel against the supreme Lord of the universe? That we should thwart and contradict his will, or murmur against  
any



any step of his administration? Think of SERM.  
his majesty and greatness, think of his XIV.  
works done in the greatest wisdom and  
the most perfect goodness, think that the  
events which he commandeth are parts  
of the most excellent design which could  
be framed: And shall we murmur against,  
or set ourselves to thwart it? No; with  
the greatest humility, and most affectionate  
resignation, let us submit to him. Ever  
accounting that what is necessary, what  
is good for the great whole over which  
God presideth, cannot be bad, nor ought  
to be accounted so by us. This is a thought  
much insisted on by some of the ancients,  
and is a very just one; and indeed, we  
not only ought, but if we think at all  
seriously, must be ashamed of any the least  
disposition to murmur at any particular  
event, which God sees necessary for the  
carrying into accomplishment his great  
design. *Job* speaketh much to this pur-  
pose, with great elevation and justness of  
sentiment, and from the greatness of God,  
of his designs and works, inferreth the  
absurdity of contradicting his will in any  
instance. And shall indeed, the potsherd  
of the earth *say to him who made them, why  
hast*

SERMON. *hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter*

XIV. *power over the clay?* and ought not that power to be absolutely submitted to, when it is known to be under the direction of the most perfect righteousness and unerring wisdom?

Thirdly, Let us put our trust in God. We see his power, we see his understanding. For there is nothing too hard for him to effect. Happy for us we know the true God, who as he is infinitely wise and powerful, so is most gracious and merciful. In him let our confidence be placed: And let it be our first and principal care, to comply with those terms, upon which his favour towards us, as the subjects of his moral kingdom, may be expected; that so our confidence towards him may be rational and well grounded. If such is our state, we cannot raise our expectations too high from his power, and unchangeable benevolence. How easy is it for him to make us happy, beyond and contrary to our expectations! Especially, as christians, it becomes us to put our trust in him. In Jesus Christ, we have a pledge of his goodness and mercy to us, which is, in truth, the most wondrous of all

all his ways ; by him we have many pre-  
 cious promises and exprels declarations of  
 the divine counsels and intentions concern-  
 ing us ; by which our hearts are assured, that  
 however things may go with his servants  
 in this world, it will be eternally well  
 with them in the next. In Jesus Christ,  
 and the gospell covenant, let us rejoice,  
 while we put no confidence in the flesh,

S E R M.  
 XIV.

of old hath thou laid the foundations of the  
 earth ; and the heavens are the work  
 of thine hands : they shall perish, but thou  
 shalt endure ; yea, all of them shall wax  
 old like a garment ; as a vestment thou shalt  
 change them, and they shall be changed ;  
 it is as when thou art the same, and thy years shall  
 not have an end, the children of thy servants  
 shall continue, and their seed shall be estab-  
 lished before thee.

NEVERTHELESS, vain men have  
 said concerning this world's  
 being, without begin-  
 ning, or concerning the frame  
 of it as the production of chance, or of ne-  
 cessity, we have learned from the scrip-  
 tures

# SERMON XV.

Of the dissolution of the material system, and the final consummation of all things.

PSALM CII. 25.

*Of old hast thou laid the foundations of the earth, and the Heavens are the work of thine hands; they shall perish, but thou shalt endure; yea all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture thou shalt change them, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end, the children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee.*

**W**HATEVER vain men have said concerning this world's **MOM** having been without beginning, or concerning the frame of it as the production of chance, or of necessity, we have learned from the scriptures



tures of truth, that the heavens and the earth, and all the hosts and inhabitants of them, were made by the word of God's power, and that they are his voluntary production, in pursuance of worthy and excellent designs: The same things we are primarily taught by the light of nature and reason; and have the strongest evidence, I may say, demonstration, that the universe is the work of an original intelligent cause, of omnipotent power and perfect goodness. We see likewise clearly, that the frame of this world could not have been without beginning, and indeed have strong proof, that, in comparison of such a duration, our globe it is but a recent production. This appeareth from many things in nature, which seem plainly to shew, that this world was not intended or made for perpetuity, and that it hath in it what portendeth dissolution and end. But it appeareth especially from the limited antiquity of history, of arts and sciences, and of kingdoms, and the works of men upon this earth. And as we know the world must have had a beginning, and are clearly informed, in the holy scriptures, concerning the production and the age of it; so we know from the scriptures, that

SER.M. it shall come to an end; not that the mat-

XV.

ter of which it consisteth shall be annihilated, for this is not said in scripture, nor is it at all probable; but that the present frame shall be dissolved, and all the works of nature and of art, which our eyes now behold, perish. The Apostle Peter hath set before us the very manner in which this great event shall come to pass. 2 Pet. chap. 3. ver. 9. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is long-suffering to us ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burnt up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be, in all holy conversation and godliness; looking for, and hasting unto, the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. This is a subject of meditation which is indeed great and interesting, and which may be improved to excellent purposes

purposes for our edification. It is very natural for believers to place themselves, in their imaginations, in the state of eye-witnesses of that event, and as looking upon nature in this catastrophe of it.

SERM.  
XV.  


When it shall come to pass, is known only to the parent of the universe, who hath taught us, that *it is not for us to know the times and seasons, which he hath kept in his own power.* But we are over and over assured, that the end will come, of the heavens and the earth; probably of this whole planetary system. The heavens passing away with a great noise, and the elements melting with fervent heat. It is moving to think that all the works of nature and of art shall be at once destroyed. We see in the works of nature admirable contrivance, great excellency and beauty; in the state of the earth and sea, so admirably adapted for the dwelling and subsistence of such multitudes of inhabitants; and in the regular changes and revolutions of nature, most wisely and happily adjusted to the great purposes for which the world was made. When we look upon the face of the earth, what wonders do we see in the vegetable

**SERM.** able productions of it! What variety,  
**XV.** what beauty! What magnificence in many  
of them! How useful are they! How fit  
for the purposes of life which they were  
intended to serve! But how much greater  
the wonders in the animal world! Who  
can tell the various kinds of living crea-  
tures which have their dwelling upon the  
earth, or in the deep waters, or who fly  
at their liberty in the open firmament of  
heaven? How amazing the variety of them!  
What beauty in them! What a wonder-  
ful uniformity in the individuals of the  
several kinds! What a wonderful grada-  
tion, from the less, to the more, perfect  
and nobler kinds, till it endeth in man,  
who is constituted the Lord of all! How  
curious and wonderful the contrivance of  
their instincts, of their connexions and re-  
lations to one another, and of the subser-  
viency of the inferior to the higher!  
These things have been much celebrated  
by all who have been attentive to the  
works of nature, and they are much ce-  
lebrated in the holy scriptures, as de-  
claring the glory of God; and represented,  
in a poetical manner, as all joining in his  
praise. All these admired works shall be  
destroyed,



destroyed; not one of them left. Their SERM.  
admired beauty and greatness, their va- XV.  
riety, their usefulness, their subordination  
to one another, the admirable order which  
by instinct is preserved among them, shall  
be no more. All shall be lost in one ge-  
neral confusion and ruin.

So shall also all the works of human  
art, and industry, and labour. Those  
monuments of greatness and power which  
seem to have been contrived to last as long  
as the world, and which have been the  
wonder of ages, how any power of man  
could effect them, shall all perish. All  
the great cities of the world, with all  
their magnificent and proud ornaments,  
shall fall into universal ruin, and not so  
much as the place of them be any more  
known; all the curious collections, which  
the learned in knowledge of nature have  
made, for ever lost. All the productions  
of learning and knowledge, all the vo-  
lumes which contain them, at once de-  
stroyed; what have from the first appea-  
rance of them, been the delight of all  
ages, and which assuredly will be so to the  
end of time, lost forever! No distinction;  
the most valuable productions of human  
B b 4                      ingenious

**SERMON** genius and art, with the least significant, go together. Thus all the works of nature, all the productions of human art and power, and all which is accounted excellent and beautiful externally, shall find in the ruins of nature their grave, from which they shall never arise. This is a very plain and short account of that great event as it is predicted in the holy scriptures: And it is a moving thing to think of it. Such a grand and magnificent, such a beautiful and curious work as this world, turned into one great heap of ruins. Imagine your selves spectators of this event; and of the end and destruction of that great theatre upon which we have acted our own little part, and what a crowd of thoughts must press into the mind, some of the most useful of which, I shall now point out to you. And first of all,

While our imaginations present to us this great and amazing event, faith at the same time calls up our attention to the supreme Being as directing the final dissolution, as He did the first formation, of nature. It was by him foreseen, it was by him intended; it is therefore right; and the mind beholding him present,

and

and executing this great work, resteth SERM.  
with a pleasing acquiescence in it, as wise XVX  
and worthy of himself. For assuredly,  
he who made the world, best knoweth  
how to dispose of it, and can never dis-  
pose of it but in a manner which is wise  
and worthy of himself. But how awful  
will the power of God then appear! He  
is often terrible in his appearances to the  
children of men; in the particular dispen-  
sations of his providence; in storms and  
tempests, in inundations and earthquakes;  
but never hath he appeared in a manner  
so awful, as he will in the dissolution of  
all nature; which we see, from the scrip-  
tural account, will be attended with pe-  
culiar circumstances of terrible majesty.  
Still these are the terrors of God; a being  
who is perfectly good as well as wise; so  
that his faithful servants have nothing to  
apprehend from them. A sense of his fa-  
vour, and faith in him, assureth the be-  
lieving mind of perfect safety; and that  
very power which shall be so amazingly  
displayed, is the certain pledge of it.  
Well then may the accepted subjects of  
God's kingdom stand as safe and quiet,  
nay, joyful spectators of that event, ador-  
ing

**SERM.** ing that Being who gave the command  
**XV.** for the creation of a world, and now  
 giveth the command for the dissolution of  
 it. He is the same, and is carrying on,  
 in all possible events, the same great de-  
 sign; of which design we are to judge,  
 not from any particular formidable events,  
 but what we most assuredly know concern-  
 ing the infinite greatness and goodness,  
 and the immutability of the divine mind.  
*God is the dwelling place of his people in all  
 generations.* The world may be lost to  
 them; their God is the same to them;  
 and his name still the Tower to which they  
 flee and are safe. This seemeth to have  
 been in the Psalmist's eye in the Passage  
 of the 102 Psalm which I have read to  
 you. *They shall perish, but thou shalt en-  
 dure; yea all of them shall wax old like a  
 garment, as a vesture shalt thou change them,  
 and they shall be changed; but thou art the  
 same and thy years shall have no end. The  
 children of thy servants shall continue, and  
 their seed shall be established before thee.*  
 Glorious view of the state of the righte-  
 ous, which can never be shaken, and  
 which in the apparent ruins of nature,

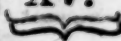


and in all possible revolutions, will be still the same! SERM.  
XV.

Secondly, It cannot but occur to our thoughts, in looking forward to this great event, that then all good and evil, which is external to us, and of the temporal kind, will be as if it had never been, as if it had no existence; like *a dream* indeed *when one awaketh*, which is no more. External things, such are station, power, and authority; such are possessions and the pleasure they yield, and health itself to enjoy them; these things are good and desirous; nature directeth every man to seek after them; and they may be improved to excellent purposes; but they are not forever. They are intended for the service and comfort of our present state, but they do not attend us at our removal from it; indeed are, as if they never existed. The splendor of crowned heads, their courts, their armies, their palaces, their conquests, and acquisitions, are no more forever. The outward distinctions of the great and the noble are lost. Their power over others, their precedence, their attendants, their table, and all things of that sort are gone. Wealth is no more.

No

**SERMON.** No more is beauty or strength, no more  
**XV** the decorations of the body, nor any thing  
 of that kind. At the conclusion of the  
 scene these things will be as if they never  
 had existed. This is a matter, to the  
 truth of which, believer and infidel in  
 other respects, must equally assent. How-  
 ever many, who will not attend to it, yet  
 to all it is certain. Those who are of this  
 world, who have their portion under the  
 sun, and never pursued any thing higher,  
 so that when this world is lost to them  
 their all is gone, yet can have no doubt of  
 the truth of what I am now saying; and  
 know well that the scene which is so  
 pleasing to them will not last for ever; last  
 indeed only for a little time. Some of  
 them perhaps are fenced against the alarm,  
 which this must otherwise unavoidably  
 give them, by a persuasion that they them-  
 selves shall have no existence in any state  
 beyond the present, and take sanctuary,  
 from fear, in the hope, the poor miserable  
 hope, of annihilation; but should this  
 prove a mistake, as we have very good  
 reason to believe it will, how miserable  
 must their state be! And indeed we shall  
 unavoidably become moderate in our  
 esteem



esteem of things temporal, when we attend to it, that in a little time these things will be as if they never had existed; light therefore, in truth, as vanity. The same may be, on the other side, applied to the evils and sufferings of life, I mean all which are external and temporal; such as sickness, pain, and the whole train of distresses to which mortal and animal life is liable; at the conclusion of the scene to all, at the conclusion of it to every individual, they will be, as if they had never been. Remembrance of them there will and must be, by which men will be affected according to their moral state, but the objects themselves of pleasure and pain, of delight and misery are no more for ever.

But, in the third place, What then remains, and which cannot be hurt or affected by the ruins and convulsions of nature? The immortal spirit remains, the moral state remains, and the character, as that is taken from the sum of all the moral actions of past life, which must therefore, with regard to the past, be fixed and unalterable, as these actions cannot be recalled, and must be eternally what they

SERMON. they have been. This is the gravest and  
 XV. most affecting of all considerations; aw-  
 ful, yet at the same time most pleasing  
 thought. This world, the great theatre,  
 upon which mankind are placed, is made  
 of such materials as may be dissolved, fall  
 into ruins, and return to that prodigious  
 chaos out of which it was formed. But  
 the spirit which God hath placed in every  
 man, a simple undivided principle of sen-  
 sation and action, is not in it's nature  
 liable to any such change, any such ruin;  
 but it would seem, must subsist and con-  
 tinue what it is, unless by the almighty  
 power of the Creator it should be annihi-  
 lated. Many have let this argument in a  
 light so strong, that in reality, it seemeth  
 to admit of no substantial answer. Come,  
 then of matter, and of the worlds which  
 are composed of it, what will, this can  
 have no relation to, or effect upon, the  
 subsistence or duration of what is not ma-  
 terial, what in it's nature speaketh im-  
 mortality. The flames which are to re-  
 duce the world to a formless mass cannot  
 hurt it. It subsisteth, it's powers likewise,  
 it's consciousness and moral character sub-  
 sist. This above all things demandeth  
 our



our attention. The moral character is an **SERMO**  
unalterable thing, as it is taken from the **XV.**  
sum of all our past actions, and the prin-  
ciples of them. If we have been righte-  
ous, it will be for ever true that we have  
been so; if we have acted an unrighteous  
and bad part, it will be for ever true that  
we have done so. If we have unfeignedly  
repented and turned from all sin to God,  
it will be for ever true that we have done  
so; and if we have been sincere believers  
in Christ, it will be for ever true that we  
have been so; the general state of the soul;  
as it is the result of those things that  
are past, can no more be alterable than  
truth itself; as little can consciousness;  
while consciousness remains, admit of any  
change.

Thus, when at the consummation of  
all things, nature is laid in ruins, the state  
of the immortal spirit is just what it was,  
and admitteth of no change; I speak now  
of it's state as the result of past actions.  
Here the mind cannot but enlarge itself,  
in contemplating the opposite characters  
of the good and of the bad. Think of  
persons, who, at the destruction of the  
present state of things, and of this world;

of

(and

Set 12 (and indeed the case is the same with re-  
 spect to individuals when they are re-  
 moved out of it) have lost their all; their  
 pleasures and possessions are all gone for  
 ever, and every thing for which they had  
 any reliance. The remembrance of them  
 must remain, but must be painful, as the  
 objects themselves are no more, and all  
 delight in them forever cut off. This is  
 a state of penury and want indeed. Again,  
 the painful consciousness of past bad  
 actions, and of a criminal conduct re-  
 main, and must forever remain, insepar-  
 able from the sinner's mind, as the shadow  
 is from the substance. And how painful  
 that consciousness, and the self-loathing  
 and abhorrence which attendeth it may  
 be, who can tell? Or who can set any di-  
 mit to the degree of it? This is a most a-  
 wakening consideration, and I humbly  
 think, much more, than any thing which  
 can come from without to alarm the  
 mind. Again, as the moral state and character  
 is quite unalterable, so must the divine  
 mind be disposed and affected towards it.  
 The character must forever appear in the  
 divine eye what it really is; and according

to what it really is, must the supreme S E R M.  
mind be affected with complacency in it, XV.  
or dislike of and aversion against it; for  
in the rules and measures of his admini-  
stration, there cannot possibly be any al-  
teration: And what the fruits and effects  
of the divine anger may be, who can say?  
Thus the case, then, upon the whole  
matter, is, the bad and unrighteous man  
remaineth, when this world is for ever lost  
to him, separated from all that ever was  
the object of his pleasure and delight; at-  
tended, as with a shadow, with a consci-  
ousness which must be the source of most  
grievous pain; in truth the most grievous  
of which we can have any idea; and a  
lasting object of his Maker's displeasure.  
To perish with the universal frame of na-  
ture, would be in this case, so to speak,  
great happiness; but that is not to be ad-  
mitted, and can never be hoped for.

On the other hand, the righteous man  
leaves this world, and will be a witness to  
the great catastrophe of nature, without  
any cause of being dismayed. He is cut  
off indeed from the past pleasures of ani-  
mal and mortal life; but he can subsist  
and be happy without them. While he

SER M. was conversant upon this theatre, he could  
XV. enjoy them; but knew in himself better  
things, and objects of higher delight, in  
his love of moral excellency, the greatest  
of all which can be called beauty; in the  
exercise of good affections, in the doing of  
good actions, in a consciousness of doing  
them, and in a sense of his Maker's fa-  
vour: And, now that the world is no  
more to him, these nobler joys remain  
with him, and no revolution whatsoever  
in nature can deprive him of them. He  
has a sense and consciousness of moral ex-  
cellency, which yieldeth the most sub-  
stantial of all pleasure, and joy, which  
can arise from a created object. He hath  
a taste and relish for all that is excellent  
without him, especially for the supreme  
and perfect excellency; in the vision of  
whom there is fulness of joy. He hath a  
sense of the favour and approbation of  
this being, which is above all other things  
to be desired; and will share with all the  
members of God's family in those emana-  
tions of his love, which crown the bliss of  
his servants. He is capable of all that  
satisfaction which ariseth from the con-  
templation of the works of God; in  
which



which there must be an entertainment, **SERMON**  
various, high, and which can never pall **XV.**  
the desire. Thus furnished, what is the  
dissolution of the world and the destruction of the works of it, to him? Especially, when he knows that this is part of the original most worthy design; and that the ruins of the former, must be the introduction of some other scene, which shall be still worthy of supreme wisdom and goodness. The mind does with high delight engage in such speculations as these, and they are in truth some of the richest entertainments of our present state. We cannot tell when the end and dissolution of nature shall come; we cannot tell what the immediate causes of it shall be; the circumstances, with which it is to be attended, strike the mind with great awe. But what we are sure of is, that the dissolution of nature is not an accidental thing, that it is the parent of the world which commandeth it; that the command for it will not be given, till the great ends and purposes, for which it was made, are fully answered; and that nothing which can come to pass in nature, or to it, can affect the moral character, and state; or

SERMON in the least hurt those interests of the servants of God, which alone are valuable.

XV.

The consummation of all things then, and the end of this world is never to be considered as an object of horror and aversion, but on the contrary of pleasing expectation; as we have the best reason to believe that the succeeding scenes will be much nobler and more desirable. I say, succeeding scenes, for as we believe assuredly that the human soul is immortal, and formed for an eternal duration, so that it cannot be lost in the general ruins of nature; we likewise have plain enough indications, that the matter or substance, out of which the frame of nature is made, shall neither be annihilated, nor lost to the creation of God; for *we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein righteousness shall dwell,* 2 Pet. iii. 13.

Fourthly, When in our imaginations we take a view of this great catastrophe of nature, the attentive cannot but see, that this frame of things, which shall then be dissolved, was intended only to minister to the great ends and purposes of a moral creation in it; and that therefore it must be

be far less excellent than that creation. S E R M.

So houses are built for the sake and upon XV.

the account of those who shall inhabit them; and temples on account of the worship to be performed in them; and theatres upon account of those public shews which are to be exhibited in them; and were it not to serve such purposes, such buildings would never have been thought of. This, with respect to this vast theatre, or frame of nature which shall be dissolved, the fact is, that it serveth for the present purposes of a moral creation upon it; where innumerable moral agents are in successive generations to act their part. But when this theatre is destroyed, these moral agents will remain just what they were, with respect to their immortal substance and powers, and clothed with moral characters suitable to the parts they have acted. Now when we see that material nature shall perish, but they remain, it is naturally suggested to the mind, that the former was originally intended, and framed, principally, to minister to the purposes of such a moral creation: And that this creation is therefore of much more account, and

**SERM.** more excellent, than that which was intended and made to serve the various purposes of it, and which but for the view of serving those or similar purposes, would have had no existence. When we look into the constitution of our world, and the various parts of it, and the gradation of beings in it, we see, that as human nature is the most excellent thing in it, so to the human kind all things were made to serve, either mediately or immediately; all the productions of the vegetable world, all the orders of animals, the beasts of the earth, the birds of the air, and the fishes of the sea; and as the usefulness of most of these is obvious, so we rationally conclude, that other things which do not appear to be useful, seeming rather to be a nuisance in the world, yet are really serviceable, though the particular uses for which they were intended we cannot assign. From this state of things we conclude, that man is the most excellent being in this lower creation, as to him all things in it minister. But this appeareth in a much stronger light when we imagine the time when all these things shall be destroyed, yet the human species remaineth;



remaineth; and is to enter into a new scene. Now, wherein doth the great excellency of the human kind consist? Not surely in natural powers and abilities; for with a large portion of these, man may be a vile and most hateful creature. It consisteth in moral rectitude, in a good heart, and a right state of the affections; this maketh man excellent, this maketh him happy, this maketh him the image of God, and capable of happiness, which may indeed be said to be divine. It is plain then, that moral rectitude was that to which this whole creation was intended to minister, and that without such a design it would have had no being. This is a very affecting and obvious demonstration of the excellency of holiness or moral rectitude in the Creator's eye, and sheweth of what estimation it ought to be with us. It may be truly said to be that, without which this whole creation would be a mere blank, and answer no valuable design. How happy were it for us if this were sufficiently impressed upon our minds! Happy is the man who under a thorough conviction of it, pursueth after moral excellency through the whole of life,

SERM. life, and accounteth all things else, as in-

XV. deed they are, *lofs and dung*, when com-  
pared to it. This we are taught, by the

religion of Christ, to consider as the distinguishing mark of his disciples; it is essential to their character; and by it they are separated from the men of this world, who have their portion upon earth.

These, negligent of that which in the creation is most excellent, that which is the glory of human nature, and the source of it's highest happiness, follow after sub-lunary and temporal things, which perish in the using, and which, but only for such usefulness, would have had no existence. If they attain to that measure of such things they aim at, they want nothing more, nothing higher. This is miserable perversion of human nature, and making that our end, which was designed only as a temporary means of serving our end. But must we wait for a conviction of this till we see all things temporal fall into ruins? Wait for a conviction of it, till a conviction of it will be of no use? Do not we see it now? Do we not see it from the nature of the things which are seen and are temporal? Do we not see

see it from the frame of our own minds, S E R M.  
 from the moral powers and capacities of XV  
 them? And that sense of moral excellency  
 which the creator of all hath planted in  
 every man? And if we do see it, may we  
 be accordingly affected, and employ life in  
 pursuing after, and acquiring that which  
 will make us safe, make us rich, make us  
 happy, when all nature around us shall be  
 dissolved, and not a single monument of  
 external greatness or power be left. This  
 we *shall* certainly see; let us be affected  
 by it as if we now saw it, or as if we  
 knew that the event were at hand; and  
 let our mind rise to a state and manner  
 of thinking, some way suitable to the  
 dignity of it's original, and subdue in us  
 the spirit of this world, and all the lusts  
 of it. We have, and must have, relation  
 to this world as our habitation for a while;  
 but yet we *are strangers and sojourners in it,*  
*as all our fathers were.* With a spirit  
 suitable to that character, let us go  
 through it, towards our everlasting a-  
 bode, *the city* which God hath prepared  
 for his servants.

Lastly, When we look forward to the  
 dissolution of nature, when it shall have  
 fully

SERM. fully answered the Creator's intention,  
XV. as a great theatre, upon which multi-  
tudes of moral agents were to act, as a  
preparation for another state of existence;  
this leads us to look upon this world,  
and the present state of things, not as in  
itself a compleat and perfect whole; but  
only as part of a design, framed for a  
particular purpose, bearing a relation to  
other parts of the great design, and there-  
fore adapted to them. This view of  
things will furnish substantial answers to  
many objections, which may be offered  
against the present state, and the divine  
administration in it. The great design  
of this whole universe, taken together,  
as consisting of a very great variety of  
parts adapted to one another, I say, the  
great design, is, no doubt, perfect and  
worthy of the infinite wisdom and good-  
ness of the glorious Creator; so, no doubt,  
is every part of it, considered as a part,  
and adapted to the great whole. But  
when a part is considered by itself, and  
without relation to that whole, it may  
appear a very imperfect and unfinished  
thing. And thus with respect to this  
world, there may be many things in it  
which,



which, considered abstractedly, and by **SERM.** themselves, may appear imperfections, **XV.** which yet considered as bearing a relation to, and being connected with other things, are perfectly right. And in this light we are ever to consider this world and the present state of things.

---

**SERMON**

---



---

# SERMON XVI.

Communion with God explained  
in a sense not liable to the charge  
of Enthusiasm.

---

I JOHN I. 6.

*If we say we have fellowship with him, and  
walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the  
truth.*

**T**HE main subjects of the Au-  
thor's discourse on this Epistle,  
are the love of God and cha-  
rity, soundness of faith, and  
holiness of life ; upon which  
he suggests many things that are of great  
weight in practical religion, and gives a  
true account of the christian spirit. In  
the

the verse before my text, he tells us, *that* S E R M.  
*God is light, and in him is no darkness.* XVI.

There are but two abstracted epithets in the whole scripture, by which God is described to us, and they are both in this Epistle; both very glorious, God is *light*, and God is *love*. A way of speaking which very agreeably strikes the imagination, and tends to give us the justest sentiments concerning the divine nature and perfections. *God is light, and in him is no darkness.* No one will be at a loss to know, that light and darkness here, according to a way of speaking much used in the holy scriptures, are to be taken in a figurative sense, and denote a moral character. So the meaning is, that God is perfectly holy and good, and that in him there is no moral imperfection, nothing evil. From this, by way of inference, the author teacheth us in my text, that *if we say we have fellowship with God, and walk in darkness* (in the crooked and perverse ways of unrighteousness, which shun the light) *we lie, and do not the truth.* For there can indeed be *no communion between light and darkness*, between God and Belial: To speak of fellowship with God  
when

SERM. when the heart is naughty, and the life

**XVI.** wicked, is utterly absurd. This will fully  
appear, when I have explained communion with God, which is my principal design in this discourse; and which I would do the more particularly, that I imagine, it is a subject which has been much mistaken, and many things said about it, that are perfectly enthusiastic. Communion or fellowship in general, signifies no more than our having any thing common to us, with others, in state, relation, or enjoyment. Thus we have fellowship with all mankind in the essential properties of human nature, which are common to all. We have fellowship with angels, in the powers and faculties of mind. And with the lower orders of creatures in the powers of animal life. Men have also fellowship one with another in the relations which arise from their being born in the same country, sprung from the same family, placed in the same circumstances, engaged in the same business, intitled to the same privileges and immunities, sitting at the same table, and the like. But very often this phrase is used in a still larger sense, to express any  
kind



kind of commerce and intercourse men **SERM.**  
have with one another, in the giving and **XVI**  
receiving favours, in the business of life,  
in conversation, and every thing of that  
sort. And this is all that I shall say  
concerning fellowship or communion in  
general.

It greatly raises our thoughts of the  
state of true christians, that *their fellowship*  
is said to be *with the father and with his*  
*son Jesus Christ.* 1 John i. 3. Let us con-  
sider in what this communion, which is  
our honour and happiness, really consists.  
And when we have stripped it of every thing  
enthusiastic and vain, we shall find in it  
pleasing encouragement, and most agree-  
able entertainment of the thoughts.

The Apostle Peter directs us to the prin-  
cipal branch of our fellowship with the  
Father, when he tells us, that christians  
are *partakers of a divine nature*: As you  
see 2 Pet. i. 4. *Whereby are given unto us*  
*exceeding great and precious promises, that*  
*by these we might be partakers of the, or ra-*  
*ther of a, divine nature, having escaped the*  
*corruption that is in the world through lust.*  
No one will be in danger of falling into  
an absurdity so gross, as to imagine that  
the

SERN. the divine nature or perfections can be

**XVI.** communicated to any mortal, or indeed,  
to any creature. This is impossible: And

the only intelligible sense in which this expression can be taken, is, that men while they become truly virtuous and good, and have worthy and pure affections ruling in them, possess so far a divine nature; that is, a temper that is like God, and is really his image upon them. Perfect purity and infinite goodness are what constitute the divine character. These are the most illustrious glories of divinity: And when men are pure in heart, and have undissembled worth and goodness in them, they have a divine nature in them, those qualities and perfections, in an inferior and low degree, which constitute the nature of God, and his glory. Agreeably to this, men of virtue and integrity are said to be the children of God, to be born from above, to be created again after the divine image. God, and the spirit of God, are said to be in them, and to dwell in them. And as we can form very clear and distinct ideas of purity and goodness in God, so we are required to set these before us as the pattern of our imitation; and are endowed with the powers of moral

ral agency which make us capable of this **S E R M.**  
imitation; and though the most perfect **XVI**  
must come infinitely short of the glorious  
standard, yet they may have real goodness  
in them, and qualities, the same in kind  
with divine perfection.

In consequence of this, there must be a fellowship with God in the ends of life and of action. The end he proposes, we may, without being too bold, affirm to be the doing good; that is, communicating happiness and promoting moral perfection. And, in this sense, in the whole of his administration, he does the greatest possible good. Men of true worth and virtue, in their sphere, pursue the same end; and are, by the principle which reigns within them, determined to a most steady and chearful concurrence with the designs of the grace of God, and the measures of his administration. 'Tis indeed true, that we have a principle planted in us which aims at our own happiness, and that operates with great strength and energy: A principle absolutely necessary in creatures, who are imperfect and dependent, and whose felicity must in some measure result from external

SERMON. nal and foreign objects; and who are  
 XVI. placed in a state in which they are to attain to this happiness, as the fruit of their own diligence in moral improvement.

— There can be nothing like this in a being originally and necessarily perfect and happy: A being, who is all sufficient, and knows no dependence, for the continuance or the fruition of existence. But as we have a principle of regard to our own interest planted in us, of which our happiness is the ultimate end, so we have principles and affections, of which the happiness of others is the ultimate end. And true moral worth will determine men to do all the good they can in the creation of God, and to his family. In this they have fellowship with God, they pursue the same end in action, and go into all those measures they are capable of, by which it may be promoted. This is so much insisted on in the new testament, that it appears to be the very essence of Christ's religion: Men who have not *charity*, are represented as having *nothing* in them. Without this, all other advantages are utterly insignificant, and with them all, without *Charity*, men are as  
 sounding



*sounding brass, or tinkling cymbals: He that loveth not, knoweth not God, has no communion with him, for God is love.* SERM. XVI  
 1 John iv. 8.

Let us go still a step farther. If we have fellowship with God in the principles and ends of life, we must have fellowship with him in felicity. As far as we can conceive of the divine bliss, it must be supposed to result from his own perfections, especially from his moral attributes, or, which is the same thing, from being and from doing good. We can frame no idea to our selves of divine fruition, in which this does not make the principal part. Now, have we not a resemblance of this, a very faint one indeed, in the state of men of true worth, and in the entertainment of their minds? Solomon tells us, *Prov. xiv. 14.* that as *the backslider in his heart shall be filled with his own way, so a good man shall be satisfied from himself.* And our Saviour tells us, *John iv. 14.* that *whofo shall drink of the water that he gives, it shall be in him a well of water springing up into eternal life.* And again, *vii. 38.* That *whofoever believes on him, out of his belly should flow rivers*

SERM. *rivers of living water.* All these expres-

**XVI.** sions plainly signify this, that the great entertainment of a good mind springs up in itself, from it's own affections and actions. And we are sure that the pleasure and happiness which does thus arise from the inward spring, are the fruits of goodness principally. This gives the most sincere felicity : And is not this like the divine felicity, as the principle from which it flows is a resemblance of the divine perfection? This is, in truth, the noblest light in which human nature can possibly be set, and gives the most engaging representation of it. How much are we obliged to the Creator of all, for those powers and faculties by which we are capable of communion with him ! And how inexcusable and horrid is it, so to abuse them, that instead of being springs of the highest and most sincere bliss, they shall become the fountains of utter woe and misery ! I hope no one will think that the account I have given exaggerates things, and raises our thoughts of human nature too high : For I have said nothing but what the holy scriptures, and indeed the principles of reason, warrant. And I am  
sure

ture it is a pleasing, and may be a very SERM  
profitable entertainment to our minds, to XVI.  
contemplate our nature in it's highest capacities and improvements; and to think seriously what an invaluable treasure is in our possession, and what an honourable station is assigned us in the scale of being. Happy the man whose care it is to preserve the sacred dignity of his nature from profanation; and labours with diligence to advance himself to the honour, and bliss, for which he was originally intended.

In the second place, We have fellowship with God as the object of our trust and dependance. We are conscious to ourselves that we *came* into being, without any agency of ours, and therefore by the power and will of another. We find we are needy creatures, dependent upon external causes and objects for the subsistence of life. We have vast prospects before us, and great reason to believe that we shall exist after death, in a state, to which we are at present in a great measure strangers. How natural is it for the mind, in this sense and view of it's state, to seek after an object of trust, which

SERM. shall be a firm rest and stay to it, and render it easy and satisfied! In the whole compass of created being no such thing is to be found; for all is precarious and uncertain, especially those things with which we are most familiarly acquainted, such as friends and possessions upon earth. But when we ascend, above all those things, to the first cause, and supreme arbiter; when we reason our selves into a firm persuasion of his being and providence, and that he is perfectly wise and perfectly good; that he will regard moral agents in a manner suitable to their nature, and the powers with which he has endowed them; that he will justly and graciously accept of and reward the good, while he inflicts deserved punishment upon the bad: Here alone we find rest to our souls. We are fully persuaded that, under the government of such a being, it shall be well with the righteous. The holy scriptures do greatly aid us in our inquiries of this sort; and teach us, that the good and worthy shall be eternally the objects of divine favour; that their sins, sincerely repented of, shall be all forgiven them; that a high happiness is provided for them:

And



And of all this the only begotten of the Father, the son of his love, given to the death for us, is the pledge. There are some expressions used in scripture, which wonderfully strike the imagination, and open and raise the heart. God himself is said to be the portion of his people. He is said to be their inheritance. And if children, then are they heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. Rom. viii. 17. Heirs of God, meaning that they inherit God, that he himself is their inheritance. And he is represented as their father in Christ, in a peculiar sense. Go to my brethren and say unto them, I ascend unto my father, and your father, to my God, and your God. John xx. 17.

Now such a relation to God, the original cause and supreme arbiter of all things, leads our thoughts to a very important branch of our fellowship with him. The power of God is engaged in our defence; the wisdom of God is our guide; the bounty of God is our inheritance; and according to the expression of the Apostle Paul, 1 Cor. iii. 22, *All things are ours, we are Christ's, and Christ is God's.* The relation is mutual, and so, through

S E R M. our Lord Jesus Christ, God is ours: That

**XVI.**

is, his power is ours for our support and defence; his wisdom ours to direct our way; his goodness to appoint all our lot, in the most agreeable and expedient manner. We are mighty in his strength, wise in his wisdom, rich in his bounty, and by the property he has in all things. His perfections then are ours, so far as the exercise of them is necessary for our subsistence and happiness. That purpose will be more effectually served by omnipotence in the hand of God, than if it were in our own. We know not what shall come to pass to us in the stages of near and distant futurity; but God knows, and that is enough for us. Our minds are narrow, and entangled with prejudice; and our judgments weak and insufficient for directing our way; but God's knowledge is infallible, and it ought fully to satisfy us, *that if we acknowledge him in all our ways, he will direct our paths.* Whatever the circumstances of men of worth in this world may be, however poor, and depressed, and unfortunate, yet they are the children and heirs of him that possesseth all things. What is really good the

*Lord will give:* And what is not good SERM.  
ought never to be the object of our XVI.  
wish. A more pleasing and easy state of

the mind cannot be imagined, than when it is prepared by true worth to lay hold on the promises and covenant of God, and can see the supreme ruler of the universe, and the high and unchangeable perfections of his nature, engaged, I may say pledged, for our subsistence and our felicity. When the believing mind can appropriate every thing in God, and in the measures of his administration, as the object of trust and joyful confidence; how must it exult in the divine greatness and grace, in his power, and the majesty of his state! What a pleasing fruition must it have of these things, the foundation, the sure foundation of the strongest private confidence, and hope! While the good affections will prepare it, at the same time, to rejoice in behalf of the whole universe, and all the creatures in it, all under the care and superintendency of this Being, who will, by the measures of his infallible wisdom, at last conduct all things to the most desirable issue. Nothing more is to be wished: And in the

**SERM.** the exercise of such faith in God, those  
**XVI.** pleasing sensations must necessarily spring  
 up in the mind, to which the name of  
 fellowship and communion with him may  
 be very properly, and often have been  
 given. Nor can the mind ever account  
 itself unhappy, while it preserves a tem-  
 per capable of such confidence toward  
 God, and of applying his gracious pro-  
 mises.

But it was observed in the beginning  
 of this discourse, that fellowship is often  
 taken in a larger sense, to signify any  
 intercourse we have with one another,  
 in the affairs and commerce of life; in  
 giving or receiving favours, or even in  
 conversation together; So fellowship with  
 God may be understood to express the  
 intercourse we have with heaven, in re-  
 ceiving continual favours, and in returns  
 of gratitude and sincere obedience. All  
 men receive daily innumerable favours  
 from God, the common favours of life;  
 but it cannot be said that all men have  
 fellowship with him: This points to inter-  
 course of another kind, and which is pe-  
 culiar to men of real worth.

*Methinks*



It thinks the chief thing to be taken SERM.  
notice of here, is the endeavours of mu- XVI.  
tual affection : If men sincerely love God,  
they must know that God loves them ;  
that is, when they are conscious to them-  
selves and satisfied of their own sincerity :  
For nothing is more certain, than that if  
our hearts be sacred to God, we have  
a place in his : And while the mind, in  
tendencies of holy affection, addresses it-  
self to God, there will be a pleasing sense  
of his love to us, a love that is unchange-  
able and eternal. This must be a most  
joyful state of the mind ; and the thoughts  
can never turn to God, with such a sense  
of things, without delight of the highest  
and most satisfying kind. There is in the  
human heart a strong appetite and desire  
after esteem and love from others ; a desire  
that is seen to obtain most in the most gene-  
rous and worthy spirits ; and it is an affec-  
tion which may serve very important purposes  
in human Life. Now, this generous affec-  
tion is gratified to the very utmost, in a  
sense that we are beloved of God ; and  
when the mind, in this consciousness, ad-  
dresses itself to him in the exercise of love  
and gratitude, this cannot fail of yielding  
the

**SERM.** the highest happiness which human nature  
**XVI.** can know. And as we have constant evidences of the divine presence with us, and see his hand every day, every minute, in every thing about us, and which concerns us, here is provision made for a continual entertainment.

Farther, as a sense of the favour of God attending a consciousness of integrity, makes the particular gifts we receive from his bounty appear in a light most pleasing and comfortable, and gives a most particular relish in the enjoyment of them. When our food and our raiment, our health and prosperity, our friends, and all other conveniences and comforts of life, are considered as coming from the hand of a God who loves us, who intends and will take pleasure in making us happy; who certainly therefore will give us every thing that is really good for us, constantly regarding us with a parental eye, and training us up, in the discipline of this life, to a fitness for an inheritance most rich and glorious in the upper world; the mind in this contemplation must feel the pleasing emotions of love, joy, and gratitude; and will utter them  
in

in the high praises of God, with unspeakable delight. Thus, an intercourse is maintained with heaven, to which bad men, and those who forget God, are utter strangers; and it is an intercourse the most natural that can be imagined. The providence of God, every hour of our lives, taking care of and conferring favours upon us, courts us to observe its sacred hand; and our doing this with proper affections of mind, is so far from being superstitious, or favouring of an enthusiastic turn, that it is certainly the most material thing imaginable, and what good sense must direct us to, if we really believe a providence, and are convinced that the holy presence is every where, and administers all our affairs.

But as men of worth and piety receive external favours in common with the rest of mankind, so that we have reason to believe that they are, in a peculiar manner, the objects of divine care, as they are the only objects of divine favour: And we certainly know that all the gifts of grace, and all the assistances that are needful to guide, and support, and encourage them, in their virtuous course, shall be

**SERM.** be conferred on them. For all these things  
**XVI.** they are to ask, and they have the divine  
 promise that they shall obtain; and in the  
 several acts of obedience and duty, of  
 love and gratitude, in which they express  
 their sense of divine favours, and make  
 such returns as they are capable of, they  
 maintain their fellowship with God.

I have only to add on this head, that  
 there are certain exercises of the mind,  
 and religious duties, in which this hap-  
 py state of the mind is more particu-  
 larly expressed: Such are devout me-  
 ditation, prayer and praise, and con-  
 versing with God in all the offices of  
 piety. When men have real worth and  
 pious dispositions, they will apply them-  
 selves to these exercises, with care and  
 delightful expectation; endeavouring by  
 them to strengthen their good affections,  
 and virtuous habits, and to encrease their  
 sacred joys; and the more they thus ap-  
 ply themselves, the more of this kind,  
 they are still like to obtain: *For to him  
 that hath shall be given, to him who impro-  
 veth what he hath shall be given, and he  
 shall have more abundantly, but from him that  
 hath not, shall be taken even that which he  
 seemeth to have.* Matt. xiii, 12.

What



What has been said upon this argument will help us to a good commentary upon some expressions of our Saviour, in which the subject is set in a very strong and affecting light. *John, xiv, 21, He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me, and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto him (not Iscariot) Lord how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself to us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, if a man love me he will keep my words, and my father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.* It is certain that the holy scriptures were not intended to teach us the exact philosophy, the particular causes of things, their relations and connections in nature; but only to give us those views, and that sense of them which might be necessary to direct our conduct, and thereby to serve the purposes of religion. What the particular agency of the divine power may be upon the human mind, we know not: Nor have we any certain rule, as far as I know, by which we may judge that any particular thoughts or desires arising

SERM, rising in the mind, are owing to that agency, as the immediate cause.

**XVI.** In general we are taught to ascribe every thing done for us, to God, as the original and first cause. But as it is very absurd to exclude the Deity, *in whom we live and have our being*, from all direct and immediate agency upon the heart of man ; so we seem to be utterly at a loss in accounting for the manner and methods of it, and in ascribing particular appearances and effects to that, as the immediate cause. With respect to the present argument, we know that in fellowship with God, as it has been described to you, there must be (if the natural influence is not obstructed by infirmity of mind) most pleasing sensations of the heart ; a solid and sincere joy, which must spring from a sense of the presence and favour of God. So when our Saviour says, *If a man loves me he will keep my words, and my father will love him, and we will come to him and make our abode with him.* ; the meaning may be, that in this state of mind men shall have such sensations of joy and bliss, so much of God and of happiness in their hearts, and this habitually, (to whatever immediate causes it

it may be owing) that such men may be properly said to have God dwelling in them: This, I say, may be the meaning, for undoubtedly it was our Saviour's principal design to shew men what they might expect to feel, and enjoy, and not the immediate causes of this; to describe the sensations of the heart, and not the particular springs of them. And when men have these sensations of sincere joy and bliss in confidence towards God, and in the belief of his presence with them, this may be very properly called the in-dwelling of divinity: Thus good men are said to be the temples of God; and of the holy ghost; and the apostle John teaches, iv, 16. that he that dwells in love, dwells in God, and God in him: Where the in-dwelling of God, plainly seems to mean that fellowship we have with him in the exercise of good affections.

In these particulars I have laid before you all that I need suggest, for explaining communion and fellowship with God. It consists, you see, principally, in our being partakers of a divine nature: And, in pursuance of that, in our hearty concurrence in serving the great ends of

E c

the

**SERM.** the divine administration, and in the participation of happiness resulting from this moral state, and temper of mind. It consists farther, in a firm confidence towards God, in resting upon his power, his wisdom, his goodness, as our own, that is, engaged to make us happy. Finally, it consists in a constant intercourse with the father of our spirits, in the exercise of mutual affection, in receiving daily favours from his hands, and making the proper returns of gratitude, duty, and obedience. And now I hope it does appear to you, that in all this, there is nothing contrary to reason, or out of nature, nothing of irrational enthusiasm: I am sure it must appear to be a very important affair in the christian life.

To preserve the mind in a fit temper for fellowship with God, and for expressing it in such exercises of the thoughts as have been described to you, will be of great use, both to our establishment in virtue, and our happiness. When once a man has good principles and dispositions, how will it encourage him in doing his duty, in doing good, to reflect, that he is acting in concurrence with his creator that he



is engaged in serving the same purpose, in which infinite power and wisdom are engaged; that in this course of action, he is graciously accepted, and will be supported by the Creator and ruler of all; that tho' he may miss of his particular aim, yet he cannot miss of the great end, namely, the greatest public and common felicity; which the divine perfections and providence ensure: What life and vigour will this give in doing good! The apostle Paul says concerning himself, that he and his other fellow labourers in the holy ministry, *were workers together with God*; now this may be truly said concerning every man of virtue, in whatever station or circumstance he may be placed.

The universe is one vast scene, under the direction of the supreme being, wherein he has a glorious work of perfect goodness, which he is constantly carrying on. Created moral agents are not only capable of receiving happiness from him themselves; but of acting a part, by which they become subordinate causes of serving the purposes of providence, to themselves and others, in promoting the felicity of the great whole. This station is certainly ve-

SERMON. ry honourable. To share in accomplishing  
 XVI. the designs of the creator's grace and be-  
 ~~~~~  
 nignity, to be workers together with him, in the greatest possible contrivance, the happy fruits of which shall subsist to all eternity.—Does not this thought give resolution and vigour in doing all that we can do, each in the little circle of his influence? Does it not give every man of virtue a certain dignity and importance in his own eye, which is exceeding pleasing? Can any thing more effectually, than this generous sentiment, suppress all narrow and selfish and impure affections of soul? Or any thing more effectually cure littleness of soul, which is one of the most fatal distempers? Does it not make self-denial easy, and our choice? Can there be a spirit in us to indulge a disposition and desire, which tend to thwart the purposes of the creator's benignity, and put us out of the way, out of the capacity, of acting a part the most generous and honourable that can be? Again, how amazingly does it raise our views of human nature, and our value for it, to think, that as we have fellow-
 ship

ship with the Creator in the same dispositions and ends of action, so we are capable of communion with him, in that kind of felicity which results from this! This speaks a dignity of state which wonderfully satisfies the mind; and to pursue after this honour and bliss, is the truly laudable ambition, which ought to be encouraged, and ever ought to prevail in our natures. We can never have too much of it. And what an abhorrence and contempt of vicious courses will not this beget in us! While these just, and generous, and manly sentiments prevail, men will never profane themselves with moral impurities. They will, from the best principles, abstain from all appearances of evil; and contract a certain disgust, when tempted to wicked things, which will very effectually guard their innocence.

Farther, how easy and happy will the mind find itself, and with what energy and vigour will it perform the duties of the christian life, with what firmness meet the difficulties, and bear the sufferings of it, when men can look to God as their certain friend and present aid!

SERM. When they can see that an almighty arm
 XVI. embraces them ; and that eternal wisdom
 is employed in appointing their lot, and ordering all their circumstances ; when they know assuredly that nothing concerns them, but what is under the gracious notice of the divine eye ! This makes the world look smiling upon them ; gives them a most delicate relish of existence ; fills them with good humour and alacrity ; and makes every thing, to which they are called, sit easy and light upon them. Unspeakable the spirit and life, which firm and rational confidence towards God gives to the mind ! Let a man be engaged in the greatest and most important designs, the most difficult as well as weighty, and in this faith, he will find refreshment and rest to his soul. Let him be surrounded with the greatest appearances of danger, and it will give steadiness and resolution. *Thou, O Lord, art a shield for me, my glory and the lifter up of my head. I laid me down and slept, and waked, for God sustained me. I will not be afraid of ten thousands that have set themselves against me round about.* Psalm. iii. How greatly pleasing
 to

to think that the voice of the thunder, the fierceness of the lightning, the internal powers of nature which make the earth to quake, the tempests which rage through the firmament on high, the dreadful waves of the tumultuous ocean, that all the powers of mankind, all the powers of the angelic world, are all equally under the control of the first being; of God, who is eternally a friend to the virtuous! and if he be their friend, all nature must really be so, for all nature is at his disposal. Infinite the advantages then of such a moral state of the mind! Would any wise man forfeit his pretensions to them, for the sake of gratifying any mean lust? Or by doing a wicked thing, to encrease his temporal gain? Would any wise man turn his back, or shrink from any severities of virtue? No surely; while such faith makes the mind easy, it becomes, at the same time, a most powerful principle of religious obedience; and gives nerves and vigour to the active powers, in doing whatever is commanded. And, to add no more under this head, how pleased and happy the

S E R M. mind in the intercourse of mutual love !

XVI. And in receiving daily favours from providence, as the pledges of it, and in the returns of gratitude, praise, and obedience ! Such is the state in which the mind ought to be with respect to the Creator ; and it is the most natural state imaginable. How reasonable is it, that when we are every moment receiving fresh favours from the hand of God, we should thankfully notice them, and be disposed to make the most grateful returns ! And how happily will this prepare the mind for receiving still more, and for improving, to the best purposes, whatever is bestowed ! How naturally will such an intercourse unite the affections, still more and more, to the divine being ; and contribute to the establishment of those sentiments, which, while they give the mind sensible joy, tend at the same time to make it worthier and better !

In the next place, from what has been said concerning fellowship with God, some virtuous and good persons may find relief from discouragements which sometimes they may labour under, and which

which are owing to mistaken apprehensions concerning it. This subject has been, not unfrequently, explained in a way which tended to fill mens minds with enthusiasm. There are indeed, growing from fellowship with God, very joyful sensations of mind; and I have shewed you how natural and rational these are. But it is a very wrong and unjust way of thinking, which confines the communion to these, or any other, sensible emotions of the spirit. For you have seen that the principal branches of it are quite different from these sensations, tending indeed to produce them; but not certainly, or always, producing them; for this may be sadly obstructed by complexional infirmities, and depression of the spirit; which is no more to be wondered at, than that men should be virtuous and good, and in a state of acceptance with God, without knowing assuredly that this is their state: A case not at all uncommon. You evidently see, that there is not one good affection in the mind, nor one good action done by the hands,

SER.M. hands, in which we have not fellow-

XVI

ship with the Father; whether we are at present sensible of it, or not. In truth, in being good, and in doing good, our fellowship with him mainly consists; and we shall be grossly mistaken, if we think otherwise concerning it. 'Tis a participation of the divine nature which is the foundation of all: and this is upheld by a constant course of the works of righteousness. Therefore, let every one who has a consciousness of his integrity be assured, that he has real fellowship with God; and it is weakness and infirmity if he does not apply to himself the consolation arising from it. For the application of this is not to be considered merely as a happiness, but also as a virtue; for you see, it has a tendency to produce the best effects. *Rejoice evermore,* is very properly given as a precept to christians, whom it becomes to rejoice in the Lord, and to give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.

To conclude the whole; from what has been said, the assertion of the apostle in my

my text, will appear so evidently true, **SERM.**
 as to need no farther illustration, viz. **XVI.**
*that if we say we have fellowship with God, and
 walk in darkness, (that is in any unrighteous
 course) we lie, and do not the truth,*

SERMON

SERMON XVII.

Of the reverence a man owes to himself, and the great importance of a just sense of the dignity of human nature, as a preservative from vice, and incentive to virtue.

CORINTH. III. 17.

For the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.

THE sense of the honourable and shameful is a very important part of our constitution, and common to all, tho' very different, in the degree of strength and delicacy,

licacy, in different persons, according to their SER. N. natural complexion and temper, or the XVII. sentiments they have received, and the habits they have contracted. When men act a part that is worthy of them, and by which they gain the esteem of others, a sense of honour, which they cannot but have upon reflection, gives them most sincere pleasure. On the contrary, when they act a bad part, and unworthy of them, a part offensive to others, and which tends to render them hateful and contemptible, the sense of this gives most pungent pain and uneasiness: And though men of the best and most ingenuous spirits, have this sense of shame in the greatest delicacy; yet there is hardly to be supposed any character so abandoned, as to have lost it utterly, and to be quite unmoved by glory or shame. It has been often observed, that this original sense of our nature is a most useful fence to virtue; and often prevents violations of it, when other, and indeed higher principles are too weak, and easily over-born: And when men have too little conscience to preserve their honour from the stain of criminal and base actions, it is well that
their

SERMON. their apprehensions of shame have power
 XVII. to do it. But, it is great pity, that there

 should be found characters, in whom the sense of honour and shame operates only with respect to those actions which are known to the world about them. Men who in public are very careful what part they act, but in the solitudes and undress of life take off the mask, and are capable of wicked and base things; they dread the opinion and judgment of their fellow-creatures, and are bound perhaps very strongly by the law of reputation; but where no eye is upon them, they know no more honour or shame; conducting themselves in moral affairs, just as those do in matter of dress, who should be at most exact pains to appear in public clean and neat, tho' at other times capable of sinking into nastiness and filth; shewing in such conduct great regard and reverence to the world, but none at all to themselves. A person of true taste in life will always act very differently from this. While he expresses a decent regard to the eye of the spectator, he maintains, at the same time, a reverence for himself; and would abhor what is base, impure and indecent,

Of Self-Respect.

431

decent, were no eye upon him but his own. Thus, in morals, 'tis in truth, a poor character, which labours to put on plausible appearances to others, and is ashamed of doing a mean or ill thing before the world, but will stop at nothing in secret; shewing some, perhaps much reverence, to the opinion of mankind, but none at all to the dignity of his own nature. A man of true probity and worth knows honour and shame in the most secret scenes and actions of life; for his own eye must be constantly upon him. And there is in every man a conscience from which nothing can be concealed. This will, if men attend to it, naturally lead them to judge of their actions by a sense of the dignity of human nature as their rule, will reproach and fill them with a painful sense of shame, when they do what is unworthy of and beneath them, and reward, with a pleasing sense of honour and true glory, what they do worthy of nature and ornamental to it. And to those feelings, which are independent of the applauses and censures of the world, and which take possession of the mind on occasion of some of the most secret actions,

SERMONS, the ingenious mind, the man of
 HVH. true worth and taste principally attends.

He reverences no creature so much as himself, that is, he stands more in awe of profaning his own dignity, than of shame before the world; and has a much more pleasing sense of internal honour, that is, the approbation of his conscience in doing what was worthy of him, than of external glory. This is doing justice to himself; and this is what I propose to recommend to you in the present discourse.

The terms glory and honour, and those of shame and ignominy, have been so generally and constantly used to express the light in which our characters and actions appear to others, according to the quality of them and of the agent, and our sense of this, and the feelings and affections of the mind, which naturally attend it, that if we use them in discoursing upon the present subject, they must really have a quite different meaning from that which they are generally used to express. And yet our language does not afford any terms more proper to signify that sense which I am now speaking of. However, the matter is not great, what

words are used, if we have the same idea S E R M.
and know what is meant: And I think no XVII.
man can miss of this, who reflects upon
his own sensations. No man but who has a
sense of dignity in his nature, his powers,
his station in the universe. No man but
has a sense *suitable* to this dignity, and
unsuitable. Now, that regard which a man
owes to his own dignity, and which,
where it prevails, will forbid his doing any
thing unworthy of it; that reverence he
owes to himself; will give him pleasing
satisfaction when he acts a worthy part,
and fill him with pain when he does what
is mean and base; what is really a prosti-
tution and profanation of himself. This
sense of pain, for want of a proper
word, we must call shame. In the com-
mon acceptation of that word, the pain
which men feel, arises from their appre-
hensions of what the world thinks of
them; as I now use it, it signifies the pain
we feel arising from a comparison of our
conduct, when it has been mean, with the
dignity of our nature and state; this,
not the opinion of the world, is the ob-
ject of the painful affection. In a word,
every man owes more reverence to
F f his

SERM. his nature, powers, and moral state, than
 XVII. to all the world; and every ingenuous
 mind will suffer more pain in a sense of
 having profaned them, than in any shame
 to which the world can put him.

That this subject may appear in a proper
 light, we must consider the dignity which
 belongs to us as men, and as christians,
 and also the dignity of station by which
 some are distinguished from others; which,
 tho' of little moment when compared with
 the other most important considerations,
 yet is not altogether unworthy of no-
 tice, and may be improved to valuable
 purposes.

No one who considers it, but must ac-
 knowledge that there is something great
 and noble in the powers of human nature.
*There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of
 the Almighty gives him understanding,* far
 superior to the birds of the air and the
 beasts of the field. The pre-eminency of
 the human species, above all others in
 this lower world, is in a fine manner re-
 presented to us by the inspired author of
 the history of the Creation, *Gen. i. 26.*
 When God had made all the other crea-
 tures, he is introduced as saying, *let us*
make

make man in our image, and after our likeness, and let him have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. In pursuance of this counsel, man was made. In the structure of his body, of an erect form; and in the majesty of his countenance, distinguished from all the brutal orders; and like one who was to rule over them. But this external visible distinction, however pleasing to the eye, is little when compared with the powers and faculties of the spirit which was breathed into man. He was endowed with great compass of understanding, capable of contemplating the Creator and his works, capable of the knowledge of truth, and of a progress in it which knows no limit or end; with great delicacy of imagination, which is an inlet to a vast variety of pleasures; with wonderful passions and affections, fitting him for the social life for which he was intended; above all endowed with a sense of good and evil, of moral beauty and deformity; in this he is most of all distinguished from the several inferior orders in animal life,

SERM. most expressly bears the divine image,
 XVII. and is capable of the imitation of God,
 formed by this excellent power for the
 most exalted, for divine pleasures, and
 nearly related to the superior orders of
 being. The other powers of the mind
 are indeed excellent, this is sacred; by
 his other faculties man is rendered supe-
 rior to the brutes, by this he is rendered
 holy, God-like. And as man was in his
 original frame and powers exalted over all
 the other creatures, so these are all given
 into his power; their service, their lives
 are his, and, by the donation of the
 Creator, all bestowed for the subsistence
 of his life, and to render it comfortable.
 But all these advantages are crowned with
 the prospect of an endless duration, and
 of endless improvements in knowledge
 and moral worth; and thereby of an
 advancement in true excellency which
 knows no limit. What high regards are
 due to such a frame, to such powers and
 advantages! How sensibly are we touched
 by any thing we account an indignity
 done to us by others! In what keen pas-
 sions are our resentments of it seen to ap-
 pear! But alas! no indignity done to us
 by

by others can hurt us as the indignities men do to themselves. This admirable frame of nature, these excellent and sacred powers are given into the trust and conduct of every man. We are not placed under a physical necessity, or, which is much the same, a necessity of instinct, by which we should be moved and acted upon in such a manner as infallibly to answer the end of our being, which is the case of the several species in the brutal world, but is not at all consistent with the moral frame and powers of human nature and the great design of them; but we are endowed with a freedom of choice, and a power of acting according to it; and as by choosing and acting well, we do honour to human nature, and answer the Creator's design; so by choosing and acting ill, we profane the glory and sanctity of our nature, and render that, which is capable of the highest advancement, and of shining in the noblest moral beauties, the most hateful and contemptible thing in the creation; for as no brute creature is capable of such attainments as the human kind, so none of them are capable of such prostitution,

SERM. and of becoming so odious. How unnatural then the part they act who so prophane themselves! And how becoming is it, that every man should have such a sense of his own dignity, as will oblige him to act up, and do justice to it; and forbid every thing that is mean and abominable! That every man should maintain a sacred regard to the high honours of humanity, and to the demands of self-esteem!

But this argument will appear still in a stronger light, when we have considered how much the original dignity of human nature is improved by the grace of the gospel. As christians, we are called to the highest privileges, and are assured of a most glorious immortality. It is a high honour done to human nature that the son of God vouchsafed to assume it. *He took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham, and, in all things he was made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God? Heb. ii. 16.* By our relation to him as brethren, we are related to the father of all as his children. We become *heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.* We are called

called to communion in the blessings of **SERMON**
his kingdom, and the glory of his exalted **XVII.**
state, to a communion in the joy that
makes himself happy. This high advancement and happiness is the fruit of a mighty apparatus in the divine administration; and of the most astonishing counsels. The son of God must be incarnate. He must, with all the characters of a divine power about him, converse for some years in our world, submitting, notwithstanding his high dignity, to all the sinless infirmities of human nature; he must be persecuted and a deep sufferer; he must die, and miraculously rise again from the dead, ascend upon high, and be invested with the dominion over all worlds, and have the administration of all affairs given into his hands. Amazing counsel for our redemption! 'Tis represented in scripture as the wonder of angels and the subject of their loftiest songs. Now, as this contrivance and the execution of it, which in every part strikes the attentive mind with surprise, gives us the strongest assurance imaginable that the state of the *redeemed*, which is intended as the fruit and end of

SER M. this great work, shall be perfectly glorious
 XVII. and happy; so it wonderfully raises our
 sense of the dignity and importance of
 human nature, for the redemption of
 which, from a state guilty and wretched,
 the whole was undertaken. How valu-
 able must mankind appear in the divine
 eye! *God so loved the world, that he gave*
his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth
in him might not perish but have eternal life.
 And surely then he valued and loved them
 beyond all expression. Ought not we
 therefore to study to do justice to the
 dignity of our own nature, to maintain
 such a regard to ourselves, as becomes
 creatures so much noticed, and who are
 of such importance in the creation of
 God? Should we not abhor the thoughts
 of doing any thing which will be a stain
 and dishonour to our natures, and study
 to make the glory of them (matchless by
 any thing in this world) shine with it's
 proper lustre? Should we not take care to
 get into a thorough sense of what we
 owe to ourselves as men and as christians?
 Ought any mean thought to be entertain-
 ed in our minds, or any mean action to
 be done by our hands? This sense of dig-
 nity

nity will inspire us with a certain ambition and greatness of mind which are perfectly becoming, and prepare us to act from principles and views, and to form and pursue designs, and to breathe desires that are suitable to our frame. An ambition, which is indeed one of the most important of virtues. Nothing a-kin to that pride and haughtiness of spirit, which fixes upon as it's object, and is inflated and swelled up on account of, little external temporal honours and distinctions, (such as parentage, wealth, strength or beauty) while it neglects the great common advantages of our state as men and christians. Vahring itself upon the little differences by which one man of worth may be distinguished from another, more than upon those honours with which human nature in general is crowned, and the moral improvements of which it is capable. This unhappy cast of temper, instead of enlarging the heart, naturally tends to make it little, really contracts the soul, and debases it; and accordingly we shall find, that tho' pride assumes to itself a lofty mien, and a haughty air, yet it's views and designs are little and low; and

SERMON. and it's entertainments poor, and, comparatively, insignificant. XVII.

Virtuous ambition grows from a just sense of the dignity common to us as men and christians; it inspires sentiments and views worthy of these characters; and which therefore must be great and generous. It breathes a spirit which becomes the children of God, the heirs of immortality, the prospect of the most solid glory above, and the nearest union to that being, who is the original source of all derived existence, perfection and bliss. No wonder, then, that when it thoroughly possesses the soul, every thing base and impure, every thing little and mean, should be banished; that all undue regards to private temporal interest should be suppressed; and that human nature should be looked upon as the most rich and glorious of all possessions.

But I know of no expressions in the holy scriptures which set this matter in a stronger or more affecting light, than those of my text. *Know you not that you are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you. If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.*

Human

Human nature then is the dwelling-place S E R M. of the divinity. Thus the same author XVII. 2 Cor. vi. 16. *For ye are the temple of the living God, as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them,* God is every where present, and the whole universe may be said to be his temple. The moral world, intelligent creatures, are no doubt more particularly the objects of his notice. But his presence is more peculiarly still with the virtuous and good. There is nothing inconsistent with the soundest philosophy, in supposing that there is an immediate agency of the first being upon the minds of men; and that light and life, from the glorious fountain of it, are derived to them: That the joy of the holy ghost should be shed abroad in their hearts, and that divine influence, or, as the scriptures speak, *divine inhabitation*, should greatly aid them in moral improvement, and be the source of their highest joy. But surely, this inhabitation of the divinity renders human nature not only honourable, but sacred. We owe great reverence to ourselves as the living temples of God; and this view of our state makes every thing that is evil, appear the more odious,

SERM. odious, as it is the profanation of what
 XVII. ought to be kept holy. *If any man defile
 the temple of God, him shall God destroy,
 for the temple of God is holy, which temple
 ye are.*

To conclude this head, Altho' any distinction which arises from temporal dignity, or eminency of station in the world, is but of small account when compared with the advantages common to us as men and christians; yet it has pleased God to appoint it, and it is necessary for the good of society, that there should be differences of station, power, dignity, and endowments of various kinds. Some are more eminent than others in the gifts of nature and fortune; some are entrusted with power and authority, others are obliged to obey; some have raised themselves to great eminency by uncommon merit, in particular offices and callings; now, whatever distinction a man enjoys by eminency of station in any of these respects, there is a regard due to it from himself; and it ought to be his care always to act a part that becomes it. What is very becoming in low life would be very indecent in a high station; and what

is

is honourable in one man, would be justly SERM. accounted shameful to another. This is XVII. so plain from innumerable instances that it needs no illustration. In a word, whatever dignity men enjoy by nature, or as christians, or whatever dignity of station is added to these, it becomes an ingenuous mind to do justice to it, and to regulate life so, that in all parts of it, there shall be the *decent* and *suitable*; that is, men ought always to act in character, and never so much consider what it is in their power to do, as what becomes them to do. Having said so much to explain the reverence we owe to ourselves, and the foundations of it, as they are laid in the dignity of nature, or the advantages and honours which are additional to it; I now proceed to recommend to you the maintaining of this reverence constantly in your minds, and making the sense of honour habitual to them, as what tends to produce the very best effects.

And first of all, it will be a very effectual preservative from the snares of vain-glory and vicious shame. There may happen cases, and they often have happened, in which the sense of the multitude

SERMON. tude shall be against men, when they are
XVII. acting the best and most virtuous part;
when what is really their glory shall be
turned, so far as the guise of the world
can turn it, into their shame. And, on
the other hand, the general and fashion-
able opinion may be so perverted, that it
shall hallow what is really dishonourable
and evil, and put marks of honourable
distinction upon men for doing what is
really shameful. This state of things to
men, who are not capable, who have not
accustomed themselves to do justice to
themselves, cannot fail of proving a great
snare. They immediately fall into base
compliances; court honour and applause,
tho' at the expence of doing evil, perhaps
even when they are sensible it is evil;
and avoid a singularity attended with
shame, tho' at the expence of neglecting
their duty, and giving up a generous and
good cause. Alas! how many have suf-
fered this way, careful to procure honour
from others, but not at all careful to do
honour to themselves! revering senseless,
fashionable opinions and ways, and the
multitudes which go into them, but not
paying any reverence to their own under-
standings

standings and consciences. What a mean appearance must such characters make in the eye of impartial judges! How much beneath nature do they act! But this is not all, nor the worst of it; for they are often betrayed into very ill things, and purchase esteem and reputation at the expence of every thing worthy and good. The man who knows how to do justice to himself will never fall into such snares. He will pursue steadily his own understanding, the conviction of his own judgment, the light of his own conscience. He will neglect all the world when set in opposition to these. He is fixed and immoveable in his virtuous singularity; I call it virtuous, for it must be so to him, when he is pursuing his own deliberate judgment, as the fruit of a careful and impartial inquiry. He will have more reverence for his own conscience, than for all the world: And his having a just sense of the dignity of human nature, and of what he owes to himself, will give him a greatness of mind, which will not only make him inflexible, but pleased in acting this part, as it is really a worthy part. Thus, you evidently see that

SERM.
XVII.

we

SERM. we can have no security, that a man shall
XVII. act worthily without it. If his principles,
his way of life are to be formed and regulated by no rule, but the caprice of fashion, it is mere accident whether he is right or wrong; and if he pursues esteem and reputation at any rate, he must change as the world does, and put on different characters as they would have him. How more generous he, who acts the part his own heart dictates, scorns a compliance which contradicts it, and despises the honour which must be acquired at the expence of being untrue to himself. In this character we have the best security we can have, of steadiness and uniformity, and of truth and righteousness: And never do men appear in a more honourable light, than when a sense of what they owe to themselves, makes them incapable of submitting to the impositions of others, and when they prefer internal honour, the approbation of their own hearts, to the applauses of all the world. This is doing justice to the dignity of nature: And to this we owe some of the most illustrious characters, and useful services, with which the history of the world presents us. Without

out the prevalence of such a spirit, christianity could never have obtained in the world; without it the protestant religion could never have obtained in the christian world; nor indeed any reformation, against which prevailing and fashionable sentiments and customs were opposed.

SER'M.
XVII.

But then, as such a spirit will make a man capable of standing alone in defence of what he knows to be just and right, and make him despise the applauses of the world, compared and set in opposition with the approbation of his own heart, so it will raise him quite above all the meanesses of an hypocritical temper. He regards first the testimony of his conscience, and seeks to be approved of himself; the opinion of others concerning him appears to be of small moment, when compared to this. He will not do an ill thing, tho' he could conceal it from the world, because he cannot conceal it from himself. In his own breast sits the judge whom he reveres, and whose sentence he dreads. He will do what is good, not to obtain applause, but to do justice to his own conscience. Thus his life will be regular tho' no mortal were to behold it. He sits in

G g

strict

SERM. strict judgment upon his own accounts.

XVII. The great question is not, what others think or know concerning me, but what is becoming and unbecoming myself as a man, and a christian; not what the world thinks concerning this or the other action of my life, but what nature, what conscience say. An hypocrite must be an utter stranger to these generous sentiments; he pays great respect to others, but none to himself; and every man must acknowledge that this is a mean and most worthless character. The man who pays just regard to himself will always act a part simple, open, and frank; and as his spirit will abhor deceitful appearances, so his life will have no need of them. Where there is no deformity to be covered, paint is quite useless.

These reflections naturally lead to the next thing I would insist on, viz. That the spirit I am recommending will be a mighty preservative from the impurities of vice. There is something in these, in all the various kinds of them, that is mean, and what an ingenuous mind must hate as shameful. To illustrate this, we need only observe the abhorrence of some par-

particular vices, which men of generous spirits express, tho' they are, perhaps very vicious in other respects. They will indulge themselves in vices by which they think their honour is not affected; but an action which (according to their sense of things) is a stain to their honour, they would die rather than be guilty of it. They have then a sense of dignity, which makes them utterly incapable of some vices. But why are they so abhorrent of some, and easy in other vices? Treachery or ingratitude they cannot bear the thoughts of, but have no abhorrence of intemperance and the impurities of the flesh. Surely every thing vicious is abominable. Some vices indeed have a peculiar meanness and baseness in them; but no vice but what is a reproach to nature, and stains the dignity of it. Why then this partiality? Surely it must be owing to the prejudice, and the biases of powerful lusts: And the man who thinks justly and impartially must see this. Well, then, if every vice is really a stain to nature, and a profanation of the dignity of it, there cannot be a more natural preservative from vice than a just sense, and a high esteem

SERM. of the dignity of nature. This begets a
XVII. greatness of mind which renders it too proud to be wicked. The person whose mind is possessed of it, as it ought to be, will look upon vice of every kind, and see it in the same light, as the man of honour would upon turning his back in the field; as the generous man would upon cruelly oppressing the widow, or entering into the fields of the fatherless; as the ingenuous mind would upon treachery in friendship, or the various methods of trick and deceit. Such a purity of temper does naturally grow from a just reverence for ourselves. The mind becomes sensible of a glory shed upon human nature, which is the noblest enjoyment, and which nothing but vice can profane and destroy; and while such an estimation of nature obtains, temptations to vice must have but small power.

But surely this sense, for the same reason that it is a preservative from vice, must also be a powerful incentive to virtue. He who has a taste for true honour, must have that commendable ambition which constantly desires the increase of it; and as it can be increased no other-
wise

wife than by the practice of virtue, his SERM. ambition must constantly stir him up to XVII. that, and give life and vigour to all his endeavours, reconciling him to any labour or difficulty by which the admired crown may shine the brighter. So the heroes who rejoice in the distinctions of the field, as the greatest and most desirable attainments, never think they have done enough, while there is any thing more to be done, any laurels to be yet obtained; so the man of corrupt ambition never thinks he has power enough, while he has a superior, perhaps, while he has an equal; and the covetous creature, whose glory, whose divinity, is his treasure, never thinks he has enough while he may have more. If we know ourselves, and what solid honour really is, we shall undoubtedly be very diligent in doing what may encrease it, and by degrees attain to a stock, in which we shall have more satisfaction than ever hero tasted in his triumphs, or the ambitious in his having no equal.

For, in the third place, this spirit will give the most generous, and therefore the most sincerely pleasing enjoyment of life. This same intellectual, moral, being, we

SERM. are possessed of, is originally a noble and
XVII. excellent thing. No man but must be
sensible of great pleasure in enjoying it.
No thought more gloomy and disconsolate,
than our being stript of it; except the
prospect of endless pain and misery in it.
But it is moral improvement which finishes
human nature, and makes it lovely; and
it is this which yields the calm, the sincere
and uninterrupted joy which virtuous
minds taste; a joy that is quite independent
of fortune or the vicissitudes of it,
of the power of men, or the powers of
darkness; and the man who knows, and
does justice to himself, possesses a noble
inheritance in the possession of himself.
To reflect upon and enjoy human
nature in its perfection, cannot but relish.
And that reverence which we owe to the
dignity of it, tho' it may put us upon
some severities of discipline, yet it amply
rewards us with the most exquisite relishes
of the noblest pleasure. He who fears and
reveres himself will be sure of the truest
enjoyment of himself, and he that knows
how to regard and do justice to the man,
will not fail of being a happy man.

It may be added lastly, that tho' the spirit
and temper I have been recommending
may

may, in many instances, have the world S E R M.
against it, and must act in contradiction to XVII.
the sentiments and modes which obtain in
it, yet, generally speaking, the surest way
for a man to be esteemed of others, is to
do justice to himself. He who seems not
to know what becomes him, cannot rea-
sonably expect that others should pay him
regard: And when men prostitute and
profane humanity in themselves, what but
contempt and disregard can be their porti-
on from others. Esteem will be procured
by nothing but true worth, or the appear-
ances of it; these, however plausible,
may be found out to be only appearances,
and all the honour which was paid to
them, will be turned into aversion and
disdain. But true worth will beget es-
teem, and maintain it: and no man who
acts from the principle of regarding his
own dignity, and doing justice to it, but
will act a worthy part. This character
will inherit love, while the mean, the
fawning, and compliant, will be looked
upon with contempt: and very justly, for
the ends of social life can never be happi-
ly answered by such men: We never can
have any dependence upon them. What
security can I have that a man will be true

SERM. to me, who is not true to himself?

XVII. What reason to expect that he will act a worthy part, in whom a sense of true worth has no place? Will he act to my honour, or be solicitous for it, who profanes his own? Will he justly regard me, who can prostitute himself?

S E R M O N

SERMON XVIII.

The relation of friendship considered; the foundation upon which it rests; the particular virtues which qualify for it, and the high happiness resulting from it.

PROVERBS XVIII. 24.

There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

I Propose in this discourse to treat of friendship, which I think is one of the noblest, and, if I might use such an expression, the most elegant relation, of which human nature is capable. It tends unspeakably to the improvement of the mind; and the pleasures which result from it are most sincere and

SERM. and delightful. You will easily perceive XVIII. from this account of it, that I am not

speaking of what in our common conversation, is often called friendship; and is no more, perhaps, than a general correspondence in the exchange of some kind offices, where there is little intimacy, generosity, or tenderness of affection; and where possibly the whole subsists upon some low sordid views and interests; but of that generous union of souls, I had almost said devotion to one another, that sincere and fervent love of spirits, which is attended with a perfect openness of heart, and unreserved intimacy; which makes mens interests one, and their joys and sorrows common; to which the greatest tenderness and delicacy of affection is necessary; and which is infinitely above every mean and selfish view; for in truth, men who are joined in such friendship, if you will pardon the impropriety of the expression, are to have but *one self* between them.

I am very sensible that such friendship is very rarely to be found; very rare indeed the characters which are capable of it. And however pleasing the picture we may

may frame in our imaginations of it, yet SERM. the mind looks up to it with regret, as XVIII. *subsisting only in fancy, as hardly any where to be equalled in life.* Yet that we may not do injustice to human nature, it must be owned, that there have been instances, in which this sacred love of minds has appeared, with as great dignity and fervor as can well be imagined. Some have found *friends that stick closer than brothers.* And seeing human nature is capable even of so great a thing, as this noble disinterested friendship, I hope it will not be thought altogether useless to discourse particularly upon it. I am sure to ingenuous minds it cannot but be pleasing, to view nature in it's most elegant refinements; and in that point of light, in which, of all others, it appears by far the most beautiful and happy.

It is an observation of the best writers upon this subject, that friendship cannot subsist but between persons of real worth; for friendship must be founded upon high esteem: But such esteem cannot be, at least it cannot be rational and lasting, where there is not true moral worth. This is the proper object of esteem, and no natural

SERM. tural advantages will do without it. **Sup-**
XVIII. pose a man had wit, courage, strength,
parentage, and every thing you can name
of that kind, to recommend him; yet if
he is without purity of manners, honesty,
benevolence, and faithfulness, we cannot
esteem him; and if we cannot esteem, we
cannot love him as a friend. Besides, in
friendship there must be a certain likeness,
and consent of soul, a consent in the great
ends and views of life, and also in the
principal methods and conduct of it; and
this consent is effectually begot and se-
cured, only by true probity and goodness;
this is the same in every one, and forms
the mind into the same sentiments, and
gives it the same views and designs in all,
the most important affairs of life. Good
spirits therefore are kindred spirits, and
resemble one another. But what is prin-
cipally to be considered is this, that no
friendship can bind a man to do an ill
thing. Our obligations to be virtuous and
good are prior, and superior to all the ob-
ligations of friendship. And therefore,
should the most intimate friend tempt a
man to transgress, he must be resisted and
thwarted. A good mind cannot com-
ply

ply with him ; and we can have no security in friendship with a bad man ; nor know how soon it may be necessary to break with him. Friendship then must be built upon the principles of virtue and honour ; and cannot subsist otherwise. But, in truth, a bad man is not capable of being a friend ; there is a certain greatness of soul, a benevolence, a faithfulness, an ingenuity, necessary to friendship, which are absolutely inconsistent with a bad moral character. S E R M.
XVIII.

But, tho' every true friend be a good man, yet every good man is not fit to be a friend. A person's character may be, in the general, a good one, and yet he may want many qualities which are necessary to friendship ; such as, first, generosity ; friendship abhors every thing that is narrow and contracted. It sacrifices little views, and interests, very readily ; and lays itself open to inconvenience, danger, and suffering, when these become necessary to serve a friend. In a word, it does for a friend as it would do for itself ; nay, upon many occasions much more. Now, let a man's character, in other respects, be never so good and valuable,

SERMON. able, if there is any thing mean and con-
XVIII. tracted in his spirit, he is incapable of
 friendship; he cannot enter into the state,
 he cannot taste the joys, or share the sor-
 rows, of his friend; he cannot do, and
 suffer, for him, as that sacred relation
 requires.

To generosity must be added tender-
 ness of affection. Jonathan *loved David*
as his own soul. There is a certain stupa-
 dity, and unconcernedness about some
 men, which makes them absolutely in-
 capable of any thing so refined as friend-
 ship. They have no delicacy of affection,
 they are not moved by the joys or sorrows
 of others; and things which do much af-
 fect tender minds, make no impression at
 all upon them. The friendly mind does,
 with great tenderness, enter into all the
 circumstances and sentiments, of his com-
 panion; can be affected with all his cares
 and fears, his joys and sorrows. Every
 thing is of importance to him that is so to
 his friend. And this tenderness of affec-
 tion begets that strange but affecting har-
 mony of souls, if I might term it so, like
 the cords of two musical instruments
 strained to the same key, where if one of
 them

them is touched any wise, the sound is SERM. communicated to the other. Where there XVIII. is true friendship there must be an exquisite mutual feeling. And when I have said that the affection must be tender, this is saying too that it must be undisssembled. Sincerity in love is essential to friendship, *Jonathan loved David as his own soul.* We must love our friends as ourselves; love them, not from any private selfish views, or advantages, (which is indeed impossible, for these cannot beget love, tho' they may the professions of it,) but so as to delight in them as in ourselves; and in their happiness as our own, for it's own sake: Making delight in them, making their happiness the ultimate end of our affection, and of all the offices of our friendship: Being as much pleased in their glory as our own, and in any advantages they enjoy, as if we enjoyed them ourselves: So *Jonathan* was affected towards *David*. So every friend, every true friend, will be affected to the person to whom he is joined in a relation so sacred.

I add, that there must be in such friendship great openness and frankness of spirit;

SERM. rit ; there must be a communication of secrets, without reserve ; unless that reserve necessarily arises from, and is caused by friendship, for this sacred relation cannot bear any other. It is one general end of friendship, to have one to whom we can communicate our inmost souls, all our cares and fears, all our joys and sorrows. Human nature very much wants and needs this : And where this end of friendship cannot be safely answered, the most important and pleasing end of it cannot be answered ; and therefore, as such friendship will prove to be of little value, it will quickly come to nothing. A dark and reserved mind cannot be a friendly one. It has indeed been given as a rule in friendship, that we should always carry it to our friend as supposing that, some time or other, he may become our enemy ; and accordingly maintain proper reserves in our communication with him, that we may never be in his power. This rule has a good deal of cunning in it, I own ; but is, at the same time, what the generosity of friendship, in it's most perfect state, cannot submit to : For the very observing of such a rule implies a suspicion of our friend :

friend: And where there is any the most remote suspicion, friendship cannot be perfect: It is a thing that abhors all jealousy, and cunning, and management: It is open, and frank, and ingenuous. But as this is indeed the case with perfect friends, and must be the case, it shews how cautious we should be in the choice we make of persons for that relation: And that we should not admit men into that intimacy, without a thorough knowledge of them, and long trial of their spirits.

But, although a friend must be ingenuous and open-hearted, a man of simplicity, and whose very heart, if I might use the expression, is transparent to his friend, yet he must be discreet and prudent; capable of concealing from others what ought to be concealed; capable of managing, in any thing that is committed to his care, with wisdom. When men betray indiscreet openness, imprudence and folly, friendship with them, instead of answering it's end by promoting the happiness and comfort of life, must be greatly hurtful, and produce most mischievous consequences. Besides, where such im-

H h

prudence

SERM.
XVIII.

SERM. prudence and weakness appears, esteem
XVIII. will necessarily be lessen'd, and friendship
 suffer in proportion with it. Men must
 not be put to the blush, they must not
 suffer by their friends disingenuity; un-
 faithfulnes is the very worst thing that
 can happen in friendship; and next to
 that, weakness and imprudence; which,
 tho' they do not speak so bad a mind, yet
 may be the cause of as great mischief;
 and make it impossible for friendship to
 subsist.

Again, it is necessary to the character of
 a friend, that he should be of a constant
 temper, directed by reason, and acting
 unchangeably according to it's direction.
 There is an unconstant humour and ficklen-
 ess in some tempers, that you can ne-
 ver know where to find, or how to be
 sure of them: Their loves and averfions
 are continually changing, and so are their
 views and purposes: Without any good
 reason they choose, and without any good
 reason refuse: They are in one mind to-
 day, and in another to-morrow. This,
 for ought I know, should rather be con-
 sidered as their misfortune than fault.
 But however that be, it makes them in-
 capable

capable of friendship. A true friend is SERM.
XVIII.
always the same; that is, his sentiments
and conduct never change, but when
there is reason for it. You find him the
same man that you left him; and may
depend upon his always being so. He is
not only faithful and honest in his dispo-
sitions, but constant in his spirit; firm
and resolved, not to be moved by humour,
not to be shocked by danger; I say, not
to be shocked by danger; for indeed, as
a man cannot be constant without cou-
rage, so without some good measure of
courage and resolution, no man is fit to
be a friend. A fearful temper will betray
men into mean things, which the dignity
of friendship abhors; and perhaps into
unfaithfulness, which must necessarily
strike at the very life of it. There is no
sure dependence upon a feeble soul; and
so there can be no fast friendship with
him.

But there is one particular in which the
firmness of a friendly mind is as much
tried, as in any other, and that is, in re-
sisting any sollicitation to do a thing that
may be in itself bad, or indiscreet, or
hurtful to him that desires it. Very of-

SERM. ten tenderness of affection is accompanied
XVIII. with a feebleness of mind, which can
hardly refuse any thing to the one we
love; and is prompted to gratify, tho' it be
greatly to the prejudice of the person we
mean to oblige, and even when we are
convinced of this. But however excus-
able this excess of good nature may ap-
pear, it is certainly a very dangerous
weakness, and may be of very bad conse-
quence, for, to act a part truly friendly,
it may be upon many occasions, neces-
sary, that we know how to refuse: There
must not be a compliance in every thing.
What is right and fit must always be our
rule; And we ought to observe it inviol-
ably, not only because the obligation to
this is superior to all the obligations of
friendship, but also from principles of
kindness and benevolence. Next to the
firmness that ought to be maintained in
denying what is hurtful, there ought to
be a resolution in animadverting upon
faults. This is the most friendly and
useful office imaginable; and an office
to which an affectionate mind does with
difficulty bring itself. To admonish and
rebuke, is to put one to great pain; and
whatever

whatever gives pain to a friend, is gone SERM.
about with reluctance and aversion: Yet XVIII.
there is no true faithfulness when this is
not done; and it is one of the noblest
ends of friendship.

Nor can any thing give more satisfaction to an ingenuous mind, than to be thus intimately related to one, who he knows, will use faithful freedom with him; and prudently animadvert upon all his weaknesses. This is a noble, and most useful security to a man; and a defence from the unhappy influence of that partiality, which very often makes us blind to our own defects, and go heedlessly on in what is disagreeable, or hurtful, to both.

But, tho' strict virtue is necessary as the foundation of true friendship, and great freedom ought to be used in animadverting upon faults; yet intimate friendship does not bear any rigid severity, any haughty stiffness of manners. It expects sweetness, and gentleness, and condescendency, so far as innocence and virtue will allow. There is in some very good and worthy characters a certain sourness, and distance, which creates awe, but at the

SERMON. same time dislike : This some men cannot
 XVIII. lay aside even in their greatest intimacies ;
 they have nothing of the meekness and
 complaisance of good nature, even when
 their dispositions are good and benevolent :
 This hurts friendship, which is a tender
 and delicate thing, and cannot flourish
 but where it finds an easiness and sweetness
 of temper, and disposition to comply with
 the humours and way of another ; where
 that compliance is consistent with the rules
 of truth, virtue, and honour.

Again, friendship abhors all jealousy ;
 a disposition to be suspicious, where there
 is no just cause given. This is the inseparable
 attendant of some, little, gloomy
 spirits ; and is a torment to themselves,
 as well as to others : Always apprehending
 things are wrong : All ear to accusations,
 however false or frivolous : All eye
 to bad appearances ; and making every little
 trifling circumstance a great thing.
 With such men there can be no fast friendship ;
 for there is no guarding against a
 jealous temper sufficiently ; it is impossible
 so to order ones behaviour that jealousy
 will not find sufficient matter of disturbance
 to itself, and to all who are about
 it.

it. The temper of one that is fit to be a **SERM.**
 friend, is frank and open; conscious of **XVIII.**
 no ungenerous cunning in itself, it does
 not suspect it in others. *It thinketh no evil;*
but hopeth all things, and believeth all things
 which are to the advantage of its friend,
 And if any circumstance appears less fa-
 vourable than one would desire, yet it
 puts the most candid interpretation upon
 it that may be; and will not entertain a
 bad opinion of a friend, nor break with
 him, without manifest proof of his doing
 what renders him unworthy that relation.

Lastly, there can be no fast friendship
 where there is not a disposition to bear
 with unavoidable infirmities, and to for-
 give faults: For there is no character
 perfect: *In many things we offend all daily.*
 And as we shall never in this life be per-
 fectly faultless ourselves; so we shall ne-
 ver meet with any one in whom there is
 not something or other offensive; and we
 are not to expect it. There may be in-
 firmities and culpable defects in characters,
 which in general are good and worthy,
 and very capable of intimate and fast
 friendship: Yet this cannot be without
 that generosity which overlooks little in-
 firmities,

SERMON. firmities, and can fix upon excellent and
 XVIII. amiable qualities, (tho' blended with the
 others) as the objects of its esteem and
 friendship. This generosity we ought by
 all means to cultivate in ourselves, con-
 sidering how much we need it in others,
 and how much we expect it; and that it
 is in all things no more than the law
 of strict equity, *that as we would men
 should do with us; we should even so do with
 them.*

Thus I have endeavoured, in a great
 number of particulars, to explain to you
 the foundations of friendship, and the
 characters that are capable of it; which
 I could not do without at the same time
 taking notice of the most important rules
 which are to be observed in it, as the treat-
 ing of the subject naturally introduced
 them. You will easily see that there are
 very few characters in human life capable
 of this delicate sacred relation: Such con-
 firmed virtue, generosity, tenderness of
 affection, openness and frankness of spirit,
 such prudence and discretion, constancy
 and firmness of mind, sweetness and com-
 plaisance of manners, absence of all jea-
 lously, and a disposition to overlook little
 faults;

faults ; these qualities, I say, which have SERM.
been declared necessary to perfect friend- XVIII.
ship, are rarely to be met with, combined
in one character : And where they are,
it must be an acquaintance of some dura-
tion, and careful observation, which can
discover them, so as to rely certainly upon
them. It is no wonder that a very wise
man lays it down as a maxim in the con-
duct of life, that a man, if possible, should
have no enemies, and very few friends.
It was enough for David to find one Jona-
than in an age. We do not find that ever
he found another like him : And perhaps,
of all places, courts are the least produc-
tive of such characters.

Seeing then that so many shining qua-
lities are necessary to make a perfect friend,
they must be very few who are perfectly
qualified for that relation ; and men should
be very cautious in their choice ; careful
not to run into intimacies all of a sudden,
intimacies fit to be used only in the high-
est friendship ; not to run into them, I
say, with persons who are not capable of
friendship at all. The most frank and ge-
nerous spirits are the most in danger of
this great error. They are often struck
with

SERM. with the appearance of some shining qualities, in strangers to them; affect the acquaintance of such persons, and an intimacy with them; the beginnings of which, perhaps, greatly increase their fondness, and carry them farther than discretion allows, and which a thorough acquaintance with the admired character convinces them was much too far.

As there cannot be too great caution in chusing an intimate friend, so there cannot be too great firmness in cleaving to him, when well chosen. A thorough friend is, undoubtedly, one of the most valuable enjoyments in human life: It is a great pleasure to have one to whom we can unbosom ourselves with perfect safety; one who will tenderly enter into and share all our griefs, which does indeed greatly alleviate them; one who will participate in all our joys, which gives them an additional relish. To have one, upon the wisdom and faithfulness of whose counsel we can securely rely, in all our perplexities; and whose power and interest, will be always at our service and command. To have one, in fine, who will use faithful freedom in disclosing to us

us all our errors, and assist us in correcting them. Providence gives nothing in mortal life more valuable than such a friend; and happy they who enjoy this blessing! Human nature is of a social make; takes pleasure in correspondence with others, and is most unhappy in solitude. But our social intercourse in general gives no such pleasure, as a faithful intimate, and *confidant* of our inmost souls. Now as nature seems to have a great cast for friendship, and to run into peculiar intimacies, (sometimes with indiscretion enough) and as the intimacy and affection of friends is something, in its kind, distinct and very different from the benevolence we are to bear to all men, and from the natural affection we owe to our nearest relations; so, I cannot help thinking, that the soul's disposition to friendship will attend it in its most perfect state; will attend it, I mean, even in heaven. Very true, *there* will be most fervent love from all, to all the blessed inhabitants; it is true likewise, that friendship will not indeed be of any moment there, on account of the relief we here obtain by it from our sorrows, or the help it gives us in our distresses; but yet there may

SERM.
XVIII.

SERM. may be in some persons a peculiar likeness
 XVIII. in temper, and employment, and taste;
 there may be eminencies in peculiar virtues, which lead into peculiar intimacies, that may heighten the relish even of heavenly delight. If such a thing may be supposed, how glorious will those friendships be, which are contracted between the perfect! How vastly superior to any thing we can imagine upon earth! Or why may not friendships, upon the foundations of virtue and honour, which have been contracted in this world, be resumed and revived in the other? And old and honourable intimacies be fixed upon such a basis, that they shall subsist for ever? Be that as it will, he who has got a perfect friend upon earth, cannot put too great a value upon him. This relation is to be maintained with great care; especially by an inviolable fidelity, which is the very sinew of friendship; for the least unfaithfulness may ruin it for ever: There's a delicacy in it, which cannot bear the rude shock of falshood and disingenuity. To do any thing that is unfaithful under the colour and profession of friendship, may perhaps pass in the world with a milder

der censure than many other faults; but SERM.
XVIII.
at the same time, I cannot help thinking it one of the greatest, It may not indeed have so many bad consequences as some other crimes; but surely, no crime whatsoever can betray a worse spirit. A man who is capable of unfaithfulness in strict friendship, one would not answer for him that he will not be capable, if tempted to it, of any wickedness. One thing is certain, that he who is capable of treachery in friendship, was never fit for being a friend; and the man who chose him as such, must have been in a great error: But whatever mischief happens to be done by his breach of fidelity, it is much better that the deceitfulness of his spirit should be known, that men may be preserved from it for the future, which is a great deliverance.

But, to conclude the whole, let it be ever remembered, that true friendship, this glorious union of spirits, is founded in virtue; in virtue, I say, in that only. 'Tis this that begets a likeness in the most important dispositions, sentiments, business, and designs of life: 'Tis this in which the attracting and cementing power consists;

SERM. lifts; which we admire for its own sake,
XVIII. and love for itself: 'Tis this only that
will make friendships firm, and constant,
and reputable: 'Tis this only that will
make present friendship truly gainful, and
the remembrance of past intimacies, pleas-
ing. This must lye at the foundation
of that, which next to virtue, is of all
things the most valuable: And as virtue
must lye at the foundation of friendship,
so all friendship ought to be considered
and improved, as a means of confirming
and exalting our virtue. So it ought to
be considered, I say, in our present state,
in which improvement in virtue ought
to be our constant aim: And the inti-
macies of a virtuous friendship have a
noble tendency this way. We insensibly
imitate the excellencies of admired charac-
ters, with which we are much and inti-
mately conversant. We receive light and
instruction from the brightest lustre of
their graces: A noble emulation to equal
them springs up in the mind. In virtu-
ous commerce, good sentiments and dis-
positions are confirmed. In the enjoy-
ment of such a friend, as I have been
describing, a man's mind rises above the
world,

Of Friendship.

475

world. All the ugly rust it contracts from SERM
the other dull scenes of life is rubbed off. XVIII.

Every sentiment that is bad, and every impure imagination, is quelled. And, in fine, while the mind enjoys the most pleasing relaxation, it also receives the most useful improvement. Let us then so manage our friendships, that they may be the means of enlarging our minds, and of making our hearts better. And in conversing together upon earth, grow fit for a noble communion in heaven.

F I N I S.

*Principal Errors of the Press, which the Reader is desired
to correct with the Pen.*

PAGE, 42, line, 6, *for* ingenious, *read* ingenuous, p. 80, l. 6, from bottom, *dele* in before intemperance, and comma after it, p. 155, l. 3, make the punctum a comma, p. 185, l. 3, from bottom, *for* even, *read* ever, p. 209, l. 6, from bottom, *read* subordination, p. 225, l. 9, *read*, in a well disciplined mind, p. 284, l. 12, *read* intended, p. 296, l. 14, *for* and *read* but, p. 305, l. 9, *dele* whose, p. 328, l. 4, from bottom, *read* in forming, p. 330, l. 15, *dele* I, p. 371, l. 16, *dele* it, p. 389, l. 10, *for* this, *read* thus, p. 411, l. 2, *for* endeavours, *read* intercourse, p. 413, l. 13, *for* material, *read* rational, and l. 8, from bottom, *dele* that, p. 433, l. 7, *read* sense of suitable, p. 448, l. 9, *read* how much more generous, p. 475, line last, *read* nobler.

world. All the ugly truth is contained in the
 the other half of life is rubbed off. XVIII
 Every sentiment that is bad, and every
 impure imagination, is quelled. And in
 fine, while the mind enjoys the most pleas-
 ing relaxation, it also receives the most
 useful improvement. Let us then to man-
 rage our minds, that they may be the
 means of, and of
 making our minds in conver-
 sation together, and fit for a
 noble conversation.



7 1 N 1 2